

EUROPEAN CITIZEN'S PRIZE 2023



**Rewarding projects that further European cooperation
and common values**



Winning projects

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Contents

AUSTRIA	3
Mutfluencer*innen	3
BELGIUM	4
Social Integration of Individuals with Trisomy 21 in European Society	4
Women's club. Project for support and adaptation of Ukrainian women in Belgium	5
BULGARIA	6
DOBRO HUB educational and sports project	6
Generators for Ukraine	7
CROATIA	8
#speciallikeyou – Let's Work Together To Turn Difficulties Into Opportunities!	8
CYPRUS	9
Annual Cyprus Pride Festival	9
CZECHIA	10
Life in a suitcase.....	10
Aid and Integration of Ukrainian Children and Families	11
DENMARK	12
The European Union Songbook	12
ESTONIA	13
Propastop.....	13
FRANCE	14
MaMaMa	14
The Trait d'Union podcast.....	15
GERMANY	16
Emergency aid for Ukraine	16
GREECE	17
THE HEROES OF TEMPI	17
REF CHECKPOINT	18
HUNGARY	19
The "I'd like to teach" Movement	19
IRELAND	20
AER Summer Academy 2022 – A Europe for the Next Generation	20
SHINE Festival	21

ITALY	22
DonnAmbiente Award	22
PizzAut – Nutriamo l’Inclusione (Let’s fuel inclusion)	23
LATVIA	24
LAMPA Conversation Democracy Festival	24
Twitter Convoy	25
LITHUANIA	26
‘Learn before you vote’ pre-election mayoral candidate debate marathon	26
LUXEMBOURG	27
Ukraine is Calling	27
MALTA	28
Soup Kitchen OFM Valletta	28
NETHERLANDS	29
Maastricht Euroregional climate debate.....	29
POLAND	30
Dzień na U	30
‘A modern-day Cinderella’: an ambisonic audio drama for blind and partially sighted people	31
PORTUGAL	32
The ‘Eu Voto’ movement.....	32
Let’s tell a story.....	33
ROMANIA	34
Autism Voice Institute.....	34
A Place for Truth	35
SLOVAKIA	36
Komiks Kira.....	36
Schools that Change the World Premium (ŠKMS).....	37
SLOVENIA	38
Project to help Ukrainian orphans and refugees	38
SPAIN	39
Trésdesis	39
CHANGING MINDS	40

AUSTRIA

Mutfluencer*innen

Application nominated by Mary KREUTZER

Organisation: Caritas Wien

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Caritas.MissingLink>

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/mutfluencer_innen/

YouTube: <https://youtu.be/fYH6MDtBwqY>

Website:

[https://www.caritas-wien.at/hilfe-angebote/asyl-](https://www.caritas-wien.at/hilfe-angebote/asyl-integration/miteinander/mutfluencerinnen)

[integration/miteinander/mutfluencerinnen](https://www.caritas-wien.at/hilfe-angebote/asyl-integration/miteinander/mutfluencerinnen)

<https://wien.youngcaritas.at/aktionen/mutfluencerinnen/>

The *Mutfluencer*innen* (inspirational influencers) project is aimed at youths and young adults, providing resources and offering a space for innovation and participation. Since summer 2021, 64 projects have already been developed and implemented. The variety of initiatives demonstrates young people's creativity and potential to help shape society. The initiatives included various arts and media projects, readings, workshops, meeting spaces and projects in the areas of sport and technology.

The economic and social impact of the COVID-19 pandemic posed and continues to pose many challenges for society. Young people in particular, whose needs and concerns were often overlooked during this period, still face uncertainties about their daily lives and future prospects.

As time passes, measures fall by the wayside, pandemic fatigue sets in and one crisis follows the other. Young people in particular, whose needs and concerns were often overlooked during this period, are now facing uncertainties about their daily lives and future prospects.

The *Mutfluencer*innen* project is aimed at youths and young adults, providing resources, advice and practical support, creating a space for innovation and participation. This will actively help shape necessary societal changes.

Since the start of the project in summer 2021, 64 projects from hundreds of submissions conceived by such inspirational influencers have already been jointly budgeted, developed and implemented, and presented to a broad public at various events.

The variety of amazing initiatives that have emerged show the creativity and potential of young people to help shape society. The initiatives covered podcasts, blogs, videos/films, artistic endeavours focusing on painting, readings, fashion shows, but also workshops, meeting spaces or projects involving sports and technology.

BELGIUM

Social Integration of Individuals with Trisomy 21 in European Society

Application submitted by Ina DELIĆ

Organisation: World Youth Alliance (WYA)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/WYAEurope>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/wyaeurope>

Website: <https://www.wya.net>

We, the World Youth Alliance Europe, held an in-person event on the celebration of World Down Syndrome Day 2023. We aimed to create a unique opportunity for the global Down syndrome community to share ideas, experiences, and knowledge and create an optimal environment for advocating and claiming equal rights for individuals with Down syndrome.

The main goal of our project was to provide a platform for experts, organisations, and individuals working in the field of Down Syndrome to share best practices and successful strategies for promoting social integration and inclusion, discuss policy initiatives and advocacy efforts aimed at promoting the rights and inclusion of individuals with Down Syndrome and raise awareness among policymakers and the general public about the challenges faced by individuals with Down Syndrome in integrating into society.

We, a team of 5 youths and members of the World Youth Alliance Europe, came together to organise this project. We contacted various MEPs and NGOs, asking them to share their expertise and experience as speakers at the event, and we also contacted a number of individuals and organisations interested in this topic and invited them as guests.

We used various social media platforms to promote our event and with the help of MEP Alex Agius Saliba, the European Parliament was secured as a suitable venue for the event. Almost 40 individuals and representatives of various organisations including the NGO 65 Degrés, represented by Louis-Dorsan Van Carloen and MEPs Patryk Jaki, Brando Benifei, and Alex Agius Saliba, all similarly passionate about the cause, attended our event and we received very positive feedback from attendees.

Our project succeeded in raising awareness about trisomy 21 and promoting the importance of social integration.

Women's club. Project for support and adaptation of Ukrainian women in Belgium

Application submitted by Svitlana PELYKH

Organisation: Ukrainian Voices Refugee Committee

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100085097783323>

Various activities aimed at providing psychological support and adaptation of Ukrainian women affected by Russian aggression. Women who were forced to flee and start a new life in another country with their children need care and help. We provide an opportunity to relieve stress, learn to control your condition and get the opportunity to communicate.

These are completely free events for women who are forced to organise their lives and the lives of their children, fleeing from Russian aggression in Ukraine. I (Pelykh Svitlana) organized the Women's Club with the support of the wonderful organisation Ukrainian Voices RC. Supporting this project and the organisation provided me with a place for meetings and with resources for informational support. Almost every week, such events are held as: Meetings-communication of women, Art therapy, Painting, English speaking club, Support of mothers, Emotional relief trainings and others.

Approximately 150 women visit our Club every month. I lead a group in Telegram, there are more than 300 followers, and we always have pleasant feedback from our visitors. My activity inspires me; I see results and real help. Do not underestimate the importance of emotional support.

Thanks to all the people of Belgium, and those who are here, for their support and willingness to be useful for our project. I involve local residents to help Ukrainian women.

I myself am in the same situation, so I personally know the importance of support! Many thanks to everyone who helps.

Glory to Ukraine!

BULGARIA

DOBRO HUB educational and sports project

Application submitted by Katerina SHUBINA

Organisation: Dobro Foundation

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/dobro.bg1>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/dobro.bg>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDdjfyfO-wAjTUiABhkqLA>

Website: <https://www.fonddobro.com>

TikTok: <https://www.tiktok.com/@dobro.bg1>

DOBRO HUB is the largest social and educational Project in Bulgaria.

It is an adaptation and integration centre for Ukrainian and Bulgarian children from three to 18 years. The project is implemented by a team of Dobro Foundation, thanks to the support of Unicef.

This project is the centre, which is attend by 1005 children every day. Ukrainian and Bulgarian children are in the focus of our attention, as well as the children with special needs. The team of 43 Ukrainian and Bulgarian best teachers and trainers work with children. The main centre is located in Sveti Vlas.

Children have the opportunity to attend various activities, including:

- sports: soccer, volleyball, basketball, boxing, karate, choreography, and gymnastics
- language speaking clubs: Bulgarian, English and Ukrainian
- exact sciences studios: chemistry, physics, biology and geography
- crafts: drawing, modelling and woodwork

Special attention goes to psychological support.

The goal of the DOBRO HUB project is to help Ukrainian children integrate into the Bulgarian community, learn the culture, language, local customs and traditions, find Bulgarian friends, practice and, of course, play together!

The mission of DOBRO HUB is to educate and develop physically, emotionally and spiritually healthy children and teenagers through daily activities, imbuing children with the need to act, to explore, to create, to be friends and to love.

Generators for Ukraine

Nomination submitted by Milena TOSHEVA

Realised by Manol PEYKOV

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/profile/646400151/search/?q=GENERATORS>

This nomination is for the civil initiative Generators for Ukraine, which was set up by the Bulgarian publisher and socially active person Manol Peykov. The campaign was successfully realised within an extremely short period and has united thousands of charitable Bulgarians. The funds raised were used to purchase power generators that were sent to Ukraine in order to provide electricity to those in needs, and in this way with light, warmth and hope.

#генераторизаукрайна

Manol Peykov is a Bulgarian publisher and a translator. He is the initiator and driving force of the Generators for Ukraine civil initiative.

As part of Russia's full-scale invasion in the fall of 2022, the energy system of Ukraine was attacked and this led to power supply shortage in the whole country. Thousands of households, public organisations and institutions were left without electricity.

As a token of compassion and solidarity with the suffering Ukrainians and as continuation of his active volunteer work, which began as soon as the war started, Manol Peykov launched a fund-raising campaign to purchase power generators for Ukraine.

The campaign was announced on his Facebook profile on November 26, 2022 and shortly became extremely popular. Thousands of Bulgarians recognised this as a very important cause and within a week EUR 250,000 was raised, generators were purchased and delivered to schools, hospitals, social homes, and bomb shelters to provide light and heat.

Although the campaign did not get a lot of coverage by the official media, it reached the hearts and minds of the Bulgarians and the number of generators kept growing. On the day of this nomination, March 27, 2023, the amount raised is EUR 705,583, and the number of generators for Ukraine totals 470. Europe and all Europeans should be aware of the importance of Manol Peykov's work especially at a time of huge challenges and threats, which our community is facing.

CROATIA

#speciallikeyou – Let's Work Together To Turn Difficulties Into Opportunities!

Nominated by Matea PANDURIĆ

Organisation: Vukovarski leptirići (Vukovar's Little Butterflies), an Association of Parents of Children with Developmental Disabilities

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/vukovarskileptirici/?locale=hr_HR

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/vukovarski.leptirici/?hl=en>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@LeoLackovic>

Website: <https://www.vukovarski-leptirici.hr/mediji/>

For many years, the Association has played a key role in positive developments concerning the provision of social services in Croatia to children with developmental disabilities. It has raised its profile with the #SpecialLikeYou project, which combined original research, public debates and advocacy, and produced a guide for parents of children with developmental disabilities. The project outcomes are used to shape further development of Croatia's public policies and aim at improving the quality of children's lives.

Not so long ago, children in eastern Croatia were discriminated against at every level and were unable to assert their fundamental human rights, children's rights, the right to health, education, preschool education and socialisation.

Today, however, thanks to the Vukovarski leptirići association, Croatian children can avail themselves of various social services, playrooms, professional treatment options provided in superbly equipped offices. More and more children are being brought into standard preschools and schools, and a teaching assistant supports each child.

The Association addresses issues stemming from the discrimination and marginalisation of children with developmental disabilities and their families. Its regular activities include providing treatments, playroom and day care options for children from vulnerable groups, which help to ensure quality day care and a hot meal (for children from poor families, the only meal of the day). In addition, the Association has launched a project entitled #SpecialLikeYou – Let's Work Together To Turn Difficulties Into Opportunities!

The project has included research, focus groups and public debates, which have helped raise awareness of the problems faced by the children and their families. More importantly, however, these activities have translated into solutions, partnerships and social enterprises capable of solving the problems of this most vulnerable social group. The Association has organised training programmes and has produced a guide for parents struggling to ensure their children's rights are asserted. The project has received funding from Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway (EEA Member States), as well as Norwegian grants.

CYPRUS

Annual Cyprus Pride Festival

Application submitted by Niyazi KIZILYUREK and Giorgos GEORGIU, Members of the European Parliament

Organisations: Accept- LGBTI Cyprus and Queer Cyprus Association

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/acceptCyprus>

<https://www.facebook.com/queercyprus>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/AcceptCY>

<https://twitter.com/queercyprus>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/acceptcyprus>

YouTube: <https://www.queercyprus.org/en>

<https://accept.cy/en/home>

The Cyprus Pride Festival -a common project of the LGBTQI+ organisations has helped the island's LGBTQI+ community promote visibility, foster solidarity and dispel misconceptions in both Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities. The project began in 2014 and evolved through the years to an annual bicommunal Cyprus Pride Festival.

Inaugurated in 2014, the Cyprus Pride Festival was a collaborative initiative by the island's LGBTQI+ community on both sides, to increase visibility, strengthen solidarity, and foster education about the LGBTQI+ community rights in and between the two communities. The primary goal was to dispel myths surrounding sexual orientation and gender identity among all Cypriots and advocate for human rights.

The first two-week common festival began on 17 May 2014, the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia, with the Pride Walk organised by Queer Cyprus Association, and culminated in the Cyprus Pride March on 31 May, 2014, organised by Accept-LGBTI Cyprus.

The festival evolved to an annual event featuring various events across Cyprus, including joint bi-communal activities in the island's buffer zone. The last pride parade was organised on 25 September 2022, while the next Pride festival is being prepared for 2023.

Since the first festival in 2014, the two organisations have continued to collaborate strongly, even organising - amongst several other common events-, the first-ever online joint Pride (2020). Other common events, organised by Accept LGBT Cyprus and Queer Cyprus, aim to raise awareness and discuss social issues which are of particular importance not only to the LGBTQI+ community, but also for the society as a whole.

CZECHIA

Life in a suitcase

Nomination submitted by Karolina KAPITÁNOVÁ

Organisation: La Vida Loca Endowment Fund

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/zivotvkufriku>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/search?q=%C5%BEivot%20v%20kuf%C5%99%C3%ADku&src=typd>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/zivotvkufriku>

YouTube:

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=%C5%BEivot+v+kuf%C5%99%C3%ADku

Website: <https://www.zivotvkufriku.cz>

Not everyone grows up in his or her original family. Each year, as many as 500 children leave a maternity ward without their biological mother and arrive at their foster parents, adoptive parents or children's home with only a discharge report from the maternity hospital. However, they do not know how they were born, what they looked like, or who first held them in their arms in place of their mother. The project helps people find their own identity and prevents social dispossession and deprivation.

That is why Michaela Chmelařová, head nurse of Royal Vinohrady University Hospital, decided that the first memories for these children needed to be saved, and Martina Opava of the Endowment Fund decided to realise her idea with the Life in a Suitcase project.

Since 2015, 60 maternity hospitals throughout the Czech Republic have got involved and, together with sponsors and obstetricians, they give these children a suitcase with their birth bracelet, first comforter, bottle, photo, outfit or toy crocheted/knitted by volunteers, and a unique diary in which the kind nurses record their first moments in the world. They often also add personal messages from the ward or the story of how the child came by their name. The suitcase then travels with them to their families/foster parents, where their carers or surrogate parents keep these memories for them. Few people imagine how difficult it is for adolescents to cope with the fact that their mothers left them after giving birth to them. They feel unwanted and do not know anything about the beginning of their lives. Life in a suitcase lets them know that they are loved and were loved and lovingly cared for right from birth by nurses and doctors, and carries a clear message: You are important to us, you were worth preparing all this for!

Aid and Integration of Ukrainian Children and Families

Application submitted by Radka PALÁTOVÁ

Website: <https://www.zskosare.cz>

Integration of refugees from Ukraine:

- Adapting to a new environment, making new friends
- Learning about the Czech Republic
- Learning the Czech language
- Working with a psychologist and an interpreter (especially for mothers with children)
- Working with a native speaker (professional translation during excursions)
- Workshops, creative work
- Holiday leisure activities (including prizes for participants), which were well received by children and parents.

The project was implemented in order to provide immediate assistance to Ukrainian refugees using the Visegrad Fund, from which funds could be disbursed in a short time. The project has involved 150 Ukrainian children and their families. Czech tutors and teachers were brought on board to facilitate integration and improve language and communication skills. The participation of Czech children has played a huge role in fostering a friendly atmosphere and encouraging networking in the new environment. A psychologist and an interpreter were invited to join the team, with a view to alleviating the war trauma felt by the children and adults. All events included transport, refreshments, tickets and an interpreter.

1. Children's Day, 1 June 2022, held in the school grounds (collection of clothes for refugees, cultural performances of historical swordsmanship, sports activities, leisure activities, creative workshops, refreshments, musical performances, etc.).
2. Excursion to the Jeseníky Mountains (Dlouhé Stráně hydroelectric power station, exhibition at Šumperk Museum,
 1. Balance Park sports activities).
 2. Visit to the Ostrava Zoo.
3. Garden party (musical performance, welcoming of new Ukrainian students and gifts for them).
4. Visit to the 'Fine Workshop' (creative workshop for children, making gifts for mothers).
5. Purchase of educational and teaching aids and materials for Czech language learning.
6. Trip to Brno – Tutankhamun exhibition, Veveří Castle.
7. Holiday camps in the suburbs (3 trips – Štramberk, Zbrašovské Jeskyně, Vyhlídková Věž Ostrava, Zlaté Hory, Jump Park Ostrava, Ondřejník, Ostrava Region)..

DENMARK

The European Union Songbook

Project submitted by Jeppe MARSLING

Organisation: The European Union Songbook Association

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/EUSongbook>

Website: <https://www.eu-songbook.org>

The EU Songbook is a democratic initiative, ongoing from in 2015-23 (the songbook will be published on 23 May 2023), where EU citizens were invited to choose six songs in six pan-European categories: the aim was to create more European sentiment and enable the 27 populations, currently mostly living parallel lives, to get to know each other better.

The EU Songbook was created in two phases: in total 110 organisations, institutions, and 87 000 citizens have helped assembling the EU Songbook.

The six song categories were selected as a compromise between suggestions from 17 music academies in 14 member states:

- 1) Love songs,
- 2) Nature & seasons,
- 3) Freedom & peace,
- 4) Folksongs & traditional songs,
- 5) Faith & spirituality and
- 6) Children's songs.

Secondly, more than 2100 music teachers, music students, choir singers and composers, nominated songs, somehow originating from EU.

Our 57 engaged national EU Songbook editors formed 27 voting lists containing the 6-10 most nominated songs in each category, each representing either a music institution, a national choir union or a music teacher association.

Thirdly and finally, the selection process was concluded in 27 consecutive public song votes, one in each member state, and conducted in the national languages (for Belgium the two largest language groups, Dutch and French, were invited to each choose half of their six songs). Facilitated by a total of 110 organisations and institutions, and publicised by more than 400 media, the song votes reached more than 87 000 people.

The European Anthem was added to the 162 songs and all songs have been translated into singable /cantabile English: for each score the original version in the 24 EU languages (+ Luxembourgish) stand side by side with a singable English translation, the most widely spoken EU language.

Our association wishes to make our annual Europe Day into the day of singing across the union. We have launched a free app for all to join this event in 2024.

ESTONIA

Propastop

Group that exposes false information and information attacks aimed at Estonia and the EU, and promotes media literacy

Project nominated by Urmas PAET, Member of the European Parliament

Organisation: Propastop

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/propastop>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/propastop>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@propastop3274/videos>

Websites: **EST:** <https://www.propastop.org>

ENG: <https://www.propastop.org/eng>

RUS: <https://www.propastop.org/rus>

Propastop was created in 2016 when a group of Estonian Defence League volunteers decided to act to protect the information space and the psychology of the population in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, an increase in the spread of misinformation and information attacks against the common democratic values of the EU.

Propastop started out as a blog in Estonian; it fights against misinformation and exposes information attacks aimed at Estonia and the EU as well as promoting media literacy. A year after they started, they opened their English blog and a year after that their Russian one. Propastop is available on social media in three languages.

Their aim is to help Estonian and EU citizens to safely navigate the complicated information space, to develop citizens' skills to think critically and to recognise misinformation and hostile propaganda. With their work, Propastop helps to secure the safety and security of not only Estonia but the whole of the EU.

Propastop has debunked hundreds of units of misinformation and exposed hostile information activity networks. It has also created media literacy materials for schools. Propastop collaborates with colleagues in the same field from neighbouring countries, Ukraine and the EU.

Propastop has become a reliable citizen journalism channel and a powerful opinion leader, whose stories are referenced by all mainstream media publications. Propastop is regularly invited to comment on topics in their area of expertise by the public broadcaster ERR and other media outlets.

Propastop representatives present at conferences in both Estonia and other Member States, and give talks to Estonian civil servants and schoolchildren.

FRANCE

MaMaMa

Project nominated by Younous OMARJEE, Member of the European Parliament
Organisation: MaMaMa Association

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/AssoMaMaMa/status/1643281114365034500>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/p/CjlkSixqbZ1>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q9ZX3jguFR0>

Website: <https://www.asso-mamama.fr>

‘MaMaMa’ is the most important of the association’s three projects. Born in April 2020 in Seine-Saint-Denis, the poorest department in mainland France, it aims to address a blind spot in emergency food aid: providing unconditional support to all single mothers in precarious situations during the first 1000 days of the child’s life.

Born at the beginning of Covid, it distributes solidarity packages tailor-made for mothers, providing products that are often ignored by normal charities: nappies, baby milk, and food for weaning babies. The project helps open children’s eyes to art and culture by providing books, toys and pushchairs, combats the isolation of mothers by organising long talks, and addresses menstrual insecurity by providing sanitary towels and pants.

It helps beneficiaries gain and improve skills by introducing them to IT applications. The project has been exported to Moldova and the Ukrainian border region (EU candidate counties), and also helps Romanian mothers by distributing parcels prepared using a computer interface created by MaMaMa which works in several languages (Ukrainian / Romanian / Russian). A winner of the France Relance award, the project has 150 volunteers, 8 citizen advocacy services and 10 employees.

It has helped 100,000 women and children, 300 social workers, 150 health centres (PMI, AP-HP) and is the personification of the values of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU (Articles 1, 20, 23 and 24).

In 2024, the association’s growing size will necessitate a change of premises.

The Trait d'Union podcast

Project submitted and carried out by Audrey VUÉTAZ

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Traitdunionpodcast>

Twitter: https://twitter.com/traitdunion_pod

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/traitdunion_podcast

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCfxcHDyj4-OJPWWHA8hIQqA>

Website: <https://www.traitdunionpodcast.com>

This is a podcast for people who do not know anything about the European Union. Each episode focuses on a person, event or date of significance to the EU. The aim is to show the public that the European Union is relevant to their daily lives.

Trait d'Union is a personal podcast, with each weekly episode focusing on a key theme, an issue that's making the news, or a major event for the EU.

It's an educational but comprehensive podcast, which explains, for example, why Brussels is not imposing its pension reform on France and why the links between France and Germany are at the heart of European integration.

Some episodes also explain what the Commission does and outline a day in the life of an MEP. Each episode also features contributions from journalists, MEPs or experts on European issues.

The aim is to pique the interest not only of people who know nothing about the EU, but also of those who do have some idea about the European institutions and European current affairs.

I'm Audrey Vuétaz, a TV journalist in France, and I created this podcast because, for many people in France, the EU seems distant, technocratic and too focused on the economy.

I have lost count of the number of times I have heard: 'Oh, the EU's just men in grey suits deciding on the size of fruit and vegetables...'. However, I also know that if you get their attention, the French are thirsty for knowledge. That is why I created the podcast, which is available on all listening platforms.

GERMANY

Emergency aid for Ukraine

Nominated by Gertrud MALTZ-SCHWARZFISCHER

Organisation: Space Eye e.V.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/spaceeyeorg>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/spaceeyeev>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@Space-Eye>

Website: <https://space-eye.org>

One of Buschheuer's greatest strengths lies in his ability to get help moving quickly and efficiently in acute emergencies. Immediately following the outbreak of the war in Ukraine on 24 February 2022, it became clear to him that emergency aid would also be needed there right away. Michael Buschheuer, alongside volunteers from Space-Eye, were some of the first to help the war victims and refugees in and from Ukraine. He did not think twice when this humanitarian crisis hit and he saw how civilians were suffering.

Space-Eye's 'Emergency aid for Ukraine' project involves organising aid convoys to transport essential goods, fundraising and finding housing for Ukrainian refugees arriving in Regensburg.

Thanks to their efforts, 50 truckloads of relief supplies worth over EUR 1.5 million were delivered to Ukraine within only six weeks after outbreak of the war. Funds were raised to support people fleeing the country and to supply various institutions and hospitals with aid that they desperately needed.

Space-Eye is also heavily involved in providing accommodation and support for refugees in and around Regensburg. The creation of a 'bus-bridge' which has enabled vulnerable persons and refugees to be evacuated and rescued on buses, especially from Regensburg's twin town Odessa, can be traced back to Buschheuer's courageous efforts.

Buschheuer is quite literally building bridges. In collaboration with various institutions and economic players, Space-Eye has managed to build a life-saving bridge between Odessa and Regensburg out of buses.

Vulnerable people who cannot reach safety on their own are being prioritised and it is primarily these people who are being rescued from the war and given secure refuge in Regensburg. Within only six weeks of the start of the war, the bus-bridge between Odessa and Regensburg enabled over 1 500 people to be brought to safety.

GREECE

THE HEROES OF TEMPI

Nominated by Maria SPYRAKI, Member of the European Parliament

Press coverage:

<https://www.newsbomb.gr/ellada/story/1406036/tempi-o-megalyteros-iroas-tistragodiaspos-o-maragkos-tou-agiou-orous-emfanistike-san-aggios>

<https://www.ertnews.gr/perifereiakoi-stathmoi/notio-aigaio/o-foititis-apo-tousleipsous-pou-epezise-sto-moiraio-treno-vrika-zontano-ena-moro-kato-apo-tokathisma-mou-ixitiko>

On 28 February 2023, the group of citizens who are recommended for an award boarded the fateful InterCity 62 passenger train, which collided with another train at Tempi and – although injured themselves – with great self-sacrifice and risking their lives, helped their fellow passengers to leave the carriages of the burning train, saving dozens of lives.

At around 11.22 p.m. on 28 February 2023, the InterCity 62 passenger train, carrying more than 350 passengers on the Athens-Thessaloniki route, collided with a goods train en route from Thessaloniki to Larissa, at Tempi. The collision, fire and derailment – the most deadly rail accident ever recorded in Greece – caused the death of 57 people and injured at least 85.

Twenty-year-old Andreas Alikaniotis from Vyronas, Iliia, 18-year-old Angelos Tsiamouras from Ierapetra, Crete, 20-year-old Michalis Klapsis, of Lipsi, students, and Giorgos, a carpenter from Agion Oros, all of them passengers, together with others, although injured themselves, acted selflessly and at risk to life and limb, to help their fellow passengers, including young children, elderly people and people with health problems, to escape the burning train; they broke windows and evacuated the carriages, and then assisted the rescue teams, saving dozens of human lives.

This group of individuals, hitherto unknown people, put into practice the European values of solidarity, fraternity, altruism and mutual aid, when they found themselves in the midst of an unspeakable disaster; they put themselves in danger and made almost superhuman efforts to save not only themselves but their fellow human beings, leaving a shining example for us all.

REF CHECKPOINT

Submitted by Georgios KERATSAS

Organisation: Greek Association of People Living with HIV - Positive Voice

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/thetikifoni>
<https://www.facebook.com/refcheckpoint>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/positivevoicegr>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/positivevoicegr>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@positivevoicegr>

Website: <https://positivevoice.gr>
<https://refcheckpoint.gr>

The new service of the Greek Association of People Living with HIV - Positive Voice, titled Ref Checkpoint and funded by AIDS Healthcare Foundation Europe, welcomes refugees, migrants and asylum seekers in friendly, easily accessible location in the centre of Athens for free HIV and Hepatitis B & C testing, sexual health counselling (and linkage to health care or other services) in 9 languages: Arabic, Urdu, Farsi, Dari, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian and English.

The team of counsellors is made up of members of the communities we address and serve each person in their native language.

The increase of diagnoses among non-Greek nationals in the last years, the significant difficulties faced by migrant populations in accessing health services and the lack of up-to-date, inclusive informative material on sexual health in their language created the need to intervene with an initiative that responds to the needs of these communities.

Ref Checkpoint aims to provide accessibility to free testing and counselling - for everyone, without stigma and discrimination.

HUNGARY

The "I'd like to teach" Movement

Application nominated by Klára DOBREV, Member of the European Parliament

Organisation: Humán Platform Egyesület

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/tanitanek>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@tanitanek.mozgalom>

Website: <https://www.tanitanek.info>

Education and in particular the situation of teachers became one of the most important issues in Europe.

Less and less young Europeans choose to become a teacher; moreover, due to personal financial grounds many teachers leave their job, which cause more and more problems in the education system.

The "I'd like to teach" movement was launched in 2016 as a result of an open letter about the crisis in public education published by the board of education of Herman Ottó High School in Miskolc.

The movement was created to fight for the development of public education and to improve the situation of teachers. Since 2016, they have been working to make teachers' representation as complete and organised as possible.

They have organized many events and constructively participated in creating recommendations to improve the education system in Hungary.

Since the spring of 2022, the organisation has coordinated the civil disobedience movement, in which 400 schools, 8000 teachers and many more students participated, due to the denial of teachers' right to strike.

The restriction of the right to strike is a violation of fundamental rights, to defend it is of utmost importance. Therefore, the movement created a fund to support those teachers who took part in strikes or in civil disobedience.

IRELAND

AER Summer Academy 2022 – A Europe for the Next Generation

Submitted by Lorène WEBER

Organisation: The Assembly of European Regions (AER)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/EuropeanRegions>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/europeanregions>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/europeanregions>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@aer-assemblyofeuropeanregi2433>

Website: <https://www.aer.eu>

LinkedIn:

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/assembly-of-european-regions-aer->

The AER Summer Academy 2022, “A Europe for the Next Generation”, organised by the Assembly of European Regions, and hosted by County Donegal and Údarás na Gaeltachta, gathered 150 participants (elected representatives, regional civil servants, youth delegates, civil society, business and university representatives), as part of the European Year of Youth.

The plenary sessions addressed the role of young people in (re)shaping their regions, and the need to involve young people in policy-making, especially to support a sustainable, inclusive, green and digital transition. The workshops addressed future-oriented and youth-focused topics such as youth involvement in supporting refugees, youth participation models, youth entrepreneurship and the skills of tomorrow, youth mobility programmes...

During the study visits, the participants learned about the Irish Peace Process in Derry City, about biodiversity preservation in Glenveagh National Park, and were taken in a ‘gteic’, a unique digital hub model developed in the Gaeltacht, encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship in rural regions. The showcase of the Irish language, traditional dances and songs, provided the participants with a unique cultural immersion.

At the Summer Academy, participants exchanged views, shared best practices, practiced capacity-building and mutual learning, hence fostering intergenerational dialogue, facilitating transnational cooperation, and nurturing a sense of European belonging.

SHINE Festival

Nominated by Grace O'SULLIVAN and Chris MACMANUS, Members of the European Parliament

Organisation: The Shona Project

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/shonadotie>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/shonadotie>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/shonadotie>

Websites:

<https://shona.ie/>

<https://shinefestival.ie>

<https://shinefestival.ie/app/uploads/2022/09/SHINE-Festival-2022-Lineup-1.pdf>

SHINE is perhaps the most significant event for young women in Ireland. SHINE Festival is an empowering event for the young women and girls of Ireland, featuring speakers and discussions on topics such as self-esteem, resilience, career, arts, wellness, health sports, people, planet, and social issues over two days around International Day of the Girl.

Launched in September 2016, The Shona Project aims to educate, empower and inspire today's Irish girls to become tomorrow's resilient, capable and confident young women. To ensure that all Irish girls have the skills, tools and self-esteem they need to achieve their potential, The Shona Project creates its impact through school workshops, a supportive online community and the SHINE Festival.

The Shona Project team has had the chance to work with 30,000 girls through school workshops, delivering 60,000 free copies of The Survival Handbook for Girls to students, and over 40,000 girls through the SHINE Festival. The Shona Project challenges the very narrow worldview of what it means to be a woman and encourages girls to define it for themselves and know their worth.

The SHINE Festival is an empowering event for the young women and girls of Ireland, featuring speakers and discussions on topics such as self-esteem, resilience, career, arts, wellness, health sports, period poverty, discrimination, people, planet, and social issues.

In 2022, due to the impact of the Covid pandemic, participants could get involved with the SHINE Festival in three ways, ensuring inclusivity and reaching as wide an audience as possible; a live event with panels of speakers and performers, streaming the event in local schools halls and classrooms, and through a new video library of over 140 inspirational discussions available all year round.

ITALY

DonnAmbiente Award

Submitted by Leonardo D'IMPORZANO

Organisation: 5 Terre Academy

Facebook: www.facebook.com/5terreacademy.com

Twitter: www.twitter.com/5terreacademy

Instagram: www.instagram.com/5terreacademy

YouTube: www.youtube.com/5terreacademy

Website: www.5terreacademy.com

The DonnAmbiente® Award recognises the work of women in raising scientific and environmental awareness. It aims to make an active contribution to breaking down the long-lasting stereotypes and prejudices hanging over the relationship between women and science, and also to encourage girls to study, research and promote scientific and environmental fields.

Ultimately, it seeks to highlight the way in which the female perspective could inject fresh impetus and innovation into scientific and environmental action, helps to set goals and offers new creative interconnections.

These hot topics are permanent features on the agenda of both the European Parliament and the Commission. Each year, the awards are followed by a conference with the main stakeholders from the sector, bringing together many of the finalists, MEPs and representatives from prominent national and international environmental associations, as well as national and international public and private bodies.

Over 10 000 pupils from schools up and down Italy have taken part in this initiative – either remotely or in person – and followed a programme designed to champion scientific knowledge.

The award has also shone a light on many small ventures and projects being run, with commitment and dedication, by young women not only in Italy but also across Europe.

PizzAut – Nutriamo l’Inclusione (Let’s fuel inclusion)

Nominated by Patrizia TOIA, Pietro BARTOLO, Paolo DE CASTRO, Elisabetta GUALMINI, Camilla LAURETI, Alessandra MORETTI, Franco ROBERTI, Daniela RONDINELLI, Massimiliano SMERIGLIO, Francesco MAJORINO, Irene TINAGLI and Achille VARIATI, Members of the European Parliament

Organisation: PizzAut Onlus

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pizzaut>

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/pizz_aut

YouTube: <https://youtube.com/@pizzaut6851>

Website: <https://www.pizzaut.it>

The aim of PizzAut’s project is to set up a seedbox for social inclusion by launching a pizzeria run by young people with autism, supported by catering professionals and specialists in the integration of people with autism. PizzAut’s project begins with a training phase, in which psychologists and education support staff identify the most suitable role for each apprentice, while also establishing how best to make each of them feel self-reliant and at ease.

The project was created in 2017 by Nico Acampora who has experience of raising and educating a child with autism, through his son Leo. PizzAut’s goal is to open the first pizzeria in Italy run entirely by young people living with autism – from the kitchen to the serving staff. This is a revolutionary approach to helping people with autism integrate both in society and the workforce. The young people involved have developed their coping mechanisms and professional skills, which has helped improve their comportment and social interactions. Many cities, both in Italy and abroad, have already expressed an interest in replicating this model.

From 2017 to 2019, PizzAut trained twelve young people with autism aged 18-24. They shadowed professionals who taught them how to knead and shape dough, add toppings and serve the product to customers. Early on in the project, PizzAut was a ‘big roving restaurant’, touring Italy and preparing meals in any establishment that would open its doors, including Palazzo Madama, the seat of the Italian Senate. However, the pandemic brought the project to a halt, along with funding efforts aimed at opening the pizzeria. This led PizzAut to open a food truck, turning its young apprentices into itinerant pizza chefs and allowing them to keep learning and working.

At long last, on 1 May 2021, the first pizzeria entirely run by young people with autism opened in Cassina de’ Pecchi. On 2 April 2023, PizzAut opened its second pizzeria in Monza in the presence of Sergio Mattarella, the President of Italy.

LATVIA

LAMPA Conversation Democracy Festival

Project nominated by Ivars IJABS and Sandra KALNIETE, Members of the European Parliament

Organisation: DOTS Foundation for an Open Society, LAMPA Conversation Festival

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/fondsDOTS.lv>
<https://www.facebook.com/FestivalsLampa>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/fondsdots>
<https://twitter.com/FestivalsLAMPA>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/festivalslampa.lv>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@FondsDOTS>
<https://www.youtube.com/@sarunufestivalslampa8942>

Website: <https://www.fondsdots.lv/EN>
<https://www.festivalslampa.lv>

LAMPA is a festival of democracy, debates and conversational culture where thousands of people have taken part in several days of discussions, workshops and games every summer since 2015. The project strengthens democratic participation, develops a culture of discussion and negotiation, stimulates interest and educates participants about social, political, scientific and cultural developments in Latvia, Europe and the world.

More than 200 organisations participate in the project each year. Thousands of people participate in the festival free of charge. For eight years of the festival, every summer, the LAMPA Democracy Festival has been held in the Latvian town of Cēsis.

For two to three days, several hundred events – talks, discussions, presentations, games – take place in the town's parks, and cultural and public spaces, involving people of all ages, especially young people. The topics include democracy, civic participation, sustainability, justice, human rights, modern governance, technology and innovation, community and neighbourhood development, education and health, economy and security.

The festival comprises more than 200 organisations annually – public organisations, public administrations, the media, educational institutions, businesses, political parties and proactive citizens from Latvia and the European Union.

It is held in several European languages and includes partners from EU and EEA countries. Anyone can apply for an event and, after passing the competition, implement it in a project.

The project has reached and involved a broad public, especially the younger generation. The number of participants has grown steadily from around 3 300 in the first year to over 19 000 in 2022, making it one of the largest events in Latvia.

The project has the potential to strengthen democratic practice through innovative methods: thousands of people organise and lead discussions, formulate and publicly express their opinions, and collaborate and engage with diverse partners on topics of importance to society and the future of Europe.

Twitter Convoy

Application submitted by Inese VAIDERE, Member of the European Parliament

Organisation: Agendum

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/poznaks>

Website: <https://agendum.lv>

The Twitter Convoy project, created by Reinis Pozņaks, has brought together people who want to help Ukraine in its war against the aggressor Russia. The project has sent more than 1 100 vehicles to Ukraine to help Ukrainians fight for freedom and democracy. The value of the donated vehicles is approximately EUR 2 million.

Reinis has raised a similar amount in donations. This was possible with the broad public involvement and solidarity that Reinis's initiative has achieved since the Russian invasion.

The Twitter Convoy project, set up by Reinis Pozņaks within the Agendum association, started shortly after Russia's brutal invasion of Ukraine. Its aim is to unite people in Latvia who want to help Ukraine by volunteering and donating their cars and money to buy cars and transfer them to Ukraine every week for the needs of its defenders.

The project has already sent more than 1 100 vehicles to Ukraine to help Ukrainians on and behind the front lines. The value of the donated vehicles is approximately EUR 2 million. Reinis has raised a similar amount in donations. Without the broad public involvement and solidarity that the Reinis-led initiative has achieved since the Russian invasion of Ukraine, such a result would not have been possible.

The money raised is essential for this noble cause, but so are the volunteers. Volunteers have already donated more than 43 000 hours to prepare the vehicles and deliver them to Ukraine.

Many people have been involved in the project, and the leadership of Reinis Pozņaks, who started the project and continued to coordinate and manage it for over a year, has been invaluable.

In recognition of the tremendous work Reinis has done to help the victims of aggression in Ukraine fight for freedom and democracy not only in their own country but also across Europe, he was recognised as the European Person of the Year 2022 in Latvia. Undoubtedly, his work, which has clearly promoted the values enshrined in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, also deserves recognition at European level.

LITHUANIA

'Learn before you vote' pre-election mayoral candidate debate marathon

Project submitted by Rugilė ANDREJEVSKYTĖ

Organisation: Learn before you vote

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/zinaukarenku>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/zinaukarenku>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/zinaukarenku>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@zinaukarenku>

Website: <https://www.zinaukarenku.lt>

Other: <https://rinkimai.zinaukarenku.lt>

The 'Learn before you vote' pre-election mayoral candidate debate marathon began on 7 February 2023 in Kalvarija Municipality, where the first of 86 mayoral candidate debates took place. Over a month and a half, young people from all over Lithuania sought out the roomiest conference halls, spoke with politicians and prepared information about candidates and local issues for journalists.

National journalists from almost all media moderated the debates on a voluntary basis. Debates became like city festivals – in all, they were watched live by around 12 000 viewers, with 500 000 watching remotely. During the debates, viewers were able to directly question eight out of ten mayoral candidates taking part in the elections. No media outlet can boast such figures for participating candidates.

The debates took place in 58 municipalities (except Kaunas City and Šalčininkai), and they were organised by over 150 volunteers, who by carrying out this activity improved their communication, time management, leadership and event organisation skills, felt more confident and more involved in the municipality's activities and functions.

As before all elections, 'Learn before you vote' said that it is necessary to prepare for voting – to think of at least three arguments for voting for one mayoral candidate or another because, 'once you've made your bed, you have to lie in it'.

The last five debates took place on 17 March. In these elections, 'Learn before you vote' reached more young people – voter turnout was greater in both the first and second rounds compared to 2019.

LUXEMBOURG

Ukraine is Calling

Project submitted by Mr. Nicolas ZHAROV

Organisation: LUkraine

Facebook: <http://facebook.com/nick.zharov>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/ZharovNicolas>

Website: <http://www.ukrainians.lu>

The international campaign "Ukraine is calling" is a project, which aims to deliver 112 emergency vehicles for Ukrainian rescuers. The campaign started in October when more than 38 fire trucks and ambulances arrived in Ukraine. A particular accent is put on the social and political level by exposing a shelled ambulance and a fire truck that has exploded on a landmine to show to the public the consequences of Russian aggression.

The project "Ukraine is calling" was a successful continuation of the "UAmbulance" project that the association "LUkraine" that was founded back in 2014. The Association "LUkraine" has been active in Luxembourg and in Ukrainian by providing humanitarian aid to Ukraine and taking care of refugees arriving in Luxembourg.

In the past year, LUkraine sent over 1000 tons of humanitarian aid, and helped to settle more than a thousand refugees in Luxembourg. Information provision, legal advice, psychological support, language courses, humanitarian aid for refugees, Ukrainian school for children, Ukrainian library are the directions that LUkraine prioritise on the local level.

In January 2023, LUkraine decided to open its own mission in Ukraine for medical and non-medical evacuation. Ukraine is in urgent need of emergency vehicles. Firefighters and paramedics are usually the first to be on the spot. However, due to the Russian aggression, more than 2000 rescue vehicles were either destroyed or captured.

This led the team of volunteers to establish a Memorandum of Cooperation with the Ministry of Health of Ukraine and the State Emergency Service of Ukraine, which has as main mission to help replacing missing vehicles and equipment to the Ukrainian rescuers.

The campaign received a lot of support from Luxembourgish media, the representation of the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Ukrainian Embassy in Belgium, the Ministry of Home Affairs of Luxembourg, as well as by many ambassadors and companies.

MALTA

Soup Kitchen OFM Valletta

Project nominated by David CASA, Member of the European Parliament

Project representative: Marcellino MICALLEF

Organisation: Soup Kitchen OFM Valletta

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/soupkitchenofmvalletta>

Website: <http://soupkitchenofmvalletta.com>

The Franciscan Friars began operating the Soup Kitchen OFM Valletta project in 2021, soon after inflation of food prices drove those on the periphery to seek aid. It is a prime example of European solidarity among citizens. By relying on donations and volunteers, the project created a community of solidarity and understanding to uphold the dignity of those at risk of poverty and social exclusion. At the core of the project is a concern with the most fundamental European right: human dignity.

Following the hardships of the pandemic, many families & individuals were in significantly worse off positions to fend off ensuing inflation. The Franciscan Friars began Soup Kitchen OFM Valletta to respond to those on the social periphery who had nowhere else to turn to.

In 2022, the project served almost 120,000 meals, feeding over 30,000 men, women and children. Those who sought the soup kitchen are locals & foreigners, from different religious and cultural backgrounds, but all in precarious situations. The Valletta project is fostering a better understanding of those most marginalised in society, not just those on low incomes due to in-work poverty, but also those recently released from prison, those battling addiction and the homeless.

By relying on donations and volunteers, the project has created a community of solidarity and understanding to uphold the dignity of those at risk of poverty and social exclusion. By being a safety net for those at the very edge of society, the project has been a prime example of European values, not least of cooperation and solidarity.

Insufficient resources can unfortunately limit rights. Hence why the Soup Kitchen OFM Valletta project deserves commendation for its efforts to uphold the inviolable principle that make our democracies better places to live: human dignity.

In the words of Fr Marcellino Micallef, the project's director: *"Human dignity and rights are ultimately about hope. Projects like this serve to "organise hope".*

NETHERLANDS

Maastricht Euroregional climate debate

Presented by Patrick WOLTERS

The aim of the project was to bring together 100 students from three countries (Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany) for one day of discussions regarding current state of the climate in this Euroregion.

This original idea came from Mr Wolters and Mr Rob Honig. Mr Wolters is a teacher at the Grotius College in Heerlen and Mr Honig has links to the Debatunie organisation.

Together they decided to organise a Euroregional debate preceded by a training session for a group of teachers from the three countries. In March and September 2022, 34 participants received training to host the debates.

The international debate on climate change was finally held in the Maastricht provincial government building and was attended by 127 students and 39 guests. A message from Mr Timmermans was also screened.

Stephan Satijn, a member of the provincial executive, opened the proceedings and a number of politicians were present to assess the students' debating skills. The mayors of Valkenburg and Stolberg, who attended, each gave their own accounts of the floods that occurred in summer of 2021.

They also went on camera that day for a project spinoff; a Euroregional documentary entitled 'Climate Knows No Borders'.

Overall, the day proved to be a great success, establishing fruitful contacts between teachers from the 12 schools involved.

We are also planning to hold a further Euroregional debate in 2023.

POLAND

Dzień na U

Nomination submitted by Krzysztof HETMAN, Elżbieta Katarzyna ŁUKACIJEWSKA, Janina OCHOJSKA, Jan OLBRYCHT, Janusz LEWANDOWSKI, Danuta Maria HUEBNER, Tomasz FRANKOWSKI, Magdalena ADAMOWICZ, Bartosz ARŁUKOWICZ, Jerzy BUZEK, Jarosław DUDA, Jarosław KALINOWSKI and Radosław SIKORSKI, Members of the European Parliament

Organisation: Rak'n'Roll Foundation. Wygraj Życie! ('Win Life!')

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/FundacjaRaknRoll/>

Twitter: https://twitter.com/raknroll_pl

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/fundacjaraknroll/>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@RaknRoll1>

Website: <https://www.raknroll.pl/>

'Dzień na U' is a project run by the Rak'n'Roll Foundation which encourages each of us to find time to check our health once a year. Without being alarmist about cancer or any other disease, we simply encourage people to confirm that everything is okay. 'Dzień na U' is about making time once a year for the check-up, that each of us needs.

The latest edition of the project features a video in which the Mermaid of Warsaw leaves the monument to go for a breast ultrasound scan. Each edition results in thousands of visits to ultrasound clinics.

The 'Dzień na U' project is both a social campaign and a work-based programme. Noting the ineffectiveness of communications around prevention that scared people with cancer mortality statistics, an effort was made to develop principles for effective prevention messages: 1. Don't use disease to scare people (encourage them to take action by getting tested); 2. Promote health check-ups (not 'early disease detection'); 3. Make the messaging about care/self-care (rather than about medical connotations). The 'Dzień na U' project arose from the need to prevent breast cancer. In Poland around 20 000 women receive are diagnosed with breast cancer every year.

One in three become aware of their illness at an advanced stage, when it is too late for effective treatment. However, only 17% of Polish women, aged 30-49 say that they have had a breast examination during the past year; 43% of women have NEVER had one. A similar situation applies to men; with only around 6% of men, aged 18-44 having had their testes examined by a doctor in the past year, while 33% of men aged 55-64 have never had a PSA test.

There is a growing awareness of the programme among workers and it is becoming increasingly popular. In 2022, media promotion of the project reached an audience of 19 million. As well as taking part in the 'Dzień na U' project, some companies are also using it as an opportunity to hold prevention workshop for their employees. The workshops are led by an expert from the Rak'n'Roll Foundation, who talks about improving the chances of good health and encourages people to make healthy choices every day.

'A modern-day Cinderella': an ambisonic audio drama for blind and partially sighted people

Application submitted by Gabriela JELONEK

Organisations: Student Radio Meteor and the Poznań Supercomputing and Networking Centre

Press coverage:

<https://www.pcss.pl/sluchowisko-z-dzwiekim-360-czyli-okno-na-swiat-dla-niewidomych-dzieci/>

https://www.rmfm24.pl/regiony/poznan/news-nowoczesne-sluchowiska-w-poznaniu-20-grudnia-projeckja-wspol,nld,6474756#crp_state=1

<https://www.onet.pl/styl-zycia/gabriela-jelonek/sluchowiska-ze-zbiorka-na-wielka-orkiestre-swiatecznej-pomocy/e0my9hb,30bc1058>

<https://telewizjastk.pl/czytaj/podroz-z-dzwiekim>

<https://codziennypoznan.pl/artykul/2022-12-19/gwiazdka-ze-sluchowiskiem-w-pcss>

<https://telewizjastk.pl/czytaj/podroz-z-dzwiekim>

The Poznań Supercomputing and Networking Centre worked with Student Radio Meteor and the school for blind children in Owińska to produce 'A modern-day Cinderella' – an ambisonic audio drama, which was later presented to pupils at the school. Audio dramas are making a comeback in a new form as a window to the world for blind and partially sighted people.

Ambisonic audio – or 360° sound – imitates the authentic positioning of sounds in space. The sound is fully immersive, so listeners feel like they are not just observing but also participating in events.

The shows took place in March and December 2022 and January 2023 at the school in Owińska and in Poznań. They were free of charge – 200 people attended. Student volunteers and lecturers from Radio Meteor at Adam Mickiewicz University created the Poznań Cinderella story.

The contemporary metropolitan take on the fairy tale has now gone ambisonic, but that's not all that has changed: the plot has been tweaked to see Cinders in her new clothes not only tackle her evil stepmother and the ugly sisters, but also get to grips with the pandemic. Gabriela Jelonek directed the drama.

Jan Skorupa produced the ambisonic version. Spatial sound is a particularly important factor in rehabilitation and early education for blind and visually impaired people when it comes to engaging with the world around them. Pupils from a partner school for blind children who had fled Kharkiv also attended the shows.

PORTUGAL

The 'Eu Voto' movement

Submitted by Vasco Galhardo SIMÕES

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/agoraevoto>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GNPmXNzISNE>

The 'Eu Voto' (or 'I'm voting') movement was established in December 2020 with the aim of closing the perceived gap between politicians and the general public, involving young people in elections and, above all, encouraging people to make an informed, conscious choice at the ballot box.

We decided to set up a non-partisan platform that would inform (mainly) young people (since they are the least engaged with traditional media outlets) about various topics, including:

- the electoral register;
- the election debate schedule;
- early voting and how to register;
- where to vote;
- early voting from abroad;
- voting during a lockdown;
- Reasons for voting (one of which is expressed in our main slogan: 'Are you going to let them choose for you?')

With this project, we wanted to encourage people to stay informed and to engage in political life in Portugal by using their vote to make their voice heard. Our vote is the greatest weapon we have. We never sought to convince young people to vote for a particular party, but rather to equip them with the tools they would need to make an informed choice instead of abstaining.

At Portugal's most recent presidential elections, the abstention rate exceeded 50%, meaning that more than half of the electorate did not vote for their head of state. Turnout is lowest among the youngest generation. If we do not change this sorry state of affairs, what will the future hold for us?

For Portugal's most recent elections – the early legislative elections – we put on an extensive campaign urging people to vote, as can be seen on our Instagram page.

Let's tell a story

Submitted by Fernanda FREITAS

Organisation: Nuvem Vitória

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/nuvemvitoria>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/nuvemvitoria>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/nuvemvitoria/>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCqldN9IKC07ljaKt7kAxT3Q>

Website: <https://nuvemvitoria.pt/>

LinkedIn:

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/nuvemvitoria/mycompany/?viewAsMember=true>

The charity *Nuvem Vitória* was founded in 2016. It was recognised as a social welfare organisation (IPSS) and as a public benefit purpose entity since 2019. As part of its mission, it carries out voluntary work unlike any other: every night, teams of volunteers read bedtime stories to children admitted to paediatric wards.

In August 2016, based on a study published by the Portuguese Paediatrics Society, we designed a pilot project in full coordination with the administration and teams responsible for paediatrics, nursing and education at the Santa Maria Hospital. By March 2017, the project was up and running – we covered 12 beds on the sixth floor with a team of 24 volunteers.

Given the innovative nature of the project, we trialled different methodologies until we were able to create the volunteering manual we use today. Never before had permission been granted to enter the children's ward for this purpose: to lull the children to a better night's sleep. This aspect had been completely neglected until then.

As the project grew, our activities were recognised as good practice in humanising paediatric health services, contributing to the general well-being of children, and also their carers and even those working in the hospital at night.

Today, the Lisbon team comprises 200 volunteers who read stories over three floors, to around 25 children per night.

We would like to highlight that the project has already been replicated in seven other hospitals – and three more in 2023; we have around 850 volunteers who have already read stories to over 51 000 hospitalised children.

ROMANIA

Autism Voice Institute

Submitted by Nicoleta Mariana ORLEA

Organisation: Autism Voice Institute

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/AutismVoiceRomania>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/autismvoiceromania/>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@autismvoice9237/featured>

Website: <https://autismvoice.ro/>

The opening of the Autism Voice Institute in Romania in 2022 was an entirely new departure, laying the foundations for research in this area at local and national level and introducing innovative recovery programmes in Romania, including treatment for adolescents and adults diagnosed with autism.

The centre thus contributes to the development and application of therapies tailored to patients' needs, while helping to monitor their progress in recovery and integration and achieve a better understanding of the range of autistic spectrum disorders.

Notwithstanding all EU directives concerning people with disabilities, especially children, Romania has no instruments in place to resolve mental health problems and facilitate the integration of those affected within society, at school or at the workplace. According to WHO estimates by country, one child in 54 suffers from autism in Romania, which does not, however keep official statistics of its own. Furthermore, we have no research and development capacity in this field and do not possess adequate services and resources adapted to the needs of children and young people with autism in Romania.

The institute, which was opened in 2022 by Voice Autism after 14 years of activity in the field of mental health, will be seeking over the next five years to come up with real solutions tailored to the present needs of young people and adults diagnosed with autism or mental health issues and to launch research and development in this area.

Located in Bucharest, the Voice Autism Multifunctional Centre for Therapy and Research comprises areas dedicated to research and development, therapy sessions, integration at school, vocational training, training in self-reliance and innovative resources (VR, SALT, microfarms), working with a team of 70 specialists, all of whom are engaged socially and professionally with modernising the mental health system in Romania. The institute serves around 500 beneficiaries at local level and around 40 000 at national level through outreach/online/distance services (courses/workshops).

A Place for Truth

Nominated by Eliza VLADescu

Organisation: Zi de Bine

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YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@asociatiazidebine7588>

Website: <https://www.zidebine.ro>

There are no words to describe the impact abuse has on a child. Abuse in itself is horrific. What follows are the difficult and traumatising processes that child victims or witnesses go through in the Romanian justice system.

With more than 10.000 cases of sexual abuse involving children, there was only one room designated for children's hearings in all of Romania. Together with V.I.S. Association, we made seven more - rooms dedicated to interviewing and hearings with minors, through an age-adapted protocol, conducted by a specialist, in a place curated to minimise the potential of re-traumatisation, all while adhering to the European standards.

The children's hearings rooms are located at Prosecutor's Offices near the Courts of the Argeş, Sibiu, Mureş, Bacău, Constanţa, Vâlcea, and Vrancea counties.

Then we took the next step and we created the first integrated centre to support investigations of child abuse in Romania. In a 142 m², we put together a hearing room, a medical exam room equipped with the first forensic colposcopy in Romania, an office for social work and therapy, a meeting room, a sample-storing room, a reception and waiting room area, two bathrooms, plus a security monitoring system.

A prosecutor or judge, examined by a doctor, supported by a social worker and therapist, all under one roof, will hear Child victims.

By the end, the Public Ministry announced the intention to take on the project, meaning that the General Prosecutor's Office will be establishing 35 hearing rooms for children at the headquarters of five General Directorates of Social Assistance and Child Protection (DGASPC) in the capital, and 30 prosecutor's offices in the country.

SLOVAKIA

Komiks Kira

Project nominated by Marek DEGRO

Written by Tomáš Kriššák

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https://www.startlab.sk/projekty/3022-kira-komiks-o-hrdinoch-ukrajiny/?fbclid=IwAR3zuzJFVHAILgvKQ1K-3_MXzvrdavarY9Ch8JWs8lOEjQm58xIUauKbLog

Illustrated comics for students and teachers mapping the events associated with Russian aggression against Ukraine through an illustrated story about a girl called Kira. The comics came out in 6 000 copies with public support through crowdfunding, and, as a result, in conjunction with expert talks by activist Tomáš Kriššák, they are distributed throughout Slovakia free of charge.

On 24 February 2022, the whole world awoke to the shock of some 200 000 Russian troops invading Ukraine. Despite the fact that this massive conflict has actually been going on in a neighbouring country for nine years, Slovaks know few facts about it. Furthermore, under the influence of long-term Russian propaganda, they often regurgitate various false and fabricated stories. This means that up to 19% of Slovaks side with the aggressor even after Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February.

We believe that civic education and knowledge of modern history has its fixed place in schools. Komiks Kira brings us important knowledge about our present day, so that Slovak teachers and students do not drown under the barrage of misinformation and propaganda.

Against the background of the story of a stuffed monkey, Kira and everyday heroes, we present a description of the key events of the conflict. Through this, Slovak students will acquire the necessary facts, not only of events in Ukraine, but also from our modern history, which is paid minimal time and attention in schools. In this way, students can become immune to Russian propaganda, which has been growing stronger in Slovakia for some time due to the lack of quality sources.

Ordinary people are an important part of the story. It is they who, under the influence of extreme conditions, have become the heroes who help the fight for freedom of their homeland.

The project was supported by 500 people with the sum of EUR 16 343 through a campaign on Startlab.sk, so the distribution of 6 000 comic books in Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Brussels and other EU Member States is currently under way.

Schools that Change the World Premium (ŠKMS)

Application submitted by Lucia POLLÁKOVÁ

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Schools that Change the World is a two-year personal and professional development programme for primary and secondary school teachers and school administrators in the Slovak Republic. Through the introduction of experiential and non-formal methods into traditional teaching, it develops social and civic competences in pupils and shapes pro-democratic and pro-European values.

The programme's innovative aspects include simple and direct methodological implementation through methodological manuals, the principle of learning by doing, e-learning available 24/7, mentoring video calls and building a community of teachers who want to change the world.

The Schools that Change the World programme has been running since 2015 in all regions of the Slovak Republic in primary and secondary schools (grammar schools, vocational secondary schools, industrial schools, etc.) and is sought after by all types of educational institutions (state, private and church schools). Our programme is inclusive and is used by special education schools. In the eight years the project has been running, we have trained 460+ participants from 350+ schools working with 103 000+ pupils.

Through teachers, we develop pupils' active citizenship, critical thinking, European values, tolerance, empathy, support for diversity, etc. Teacher training takes the form of hybrid training, e-learning, mentoring through methodological newsletters or innovative methodological guides on topical issues.

The programme was commended this year by the Dutch royal couple, who during their visit to Slovakia visited a school involved in the Schools that Change the World programme and tried out our experiential activities aimed at combating misinformation.

The Civics Innovation Hub has included us in a pan-European network of outstanding providers of civic education. We also teach cross-curricular linking, so that teachers also look for the civic dimension in science or technology and thus teach subjects in context.

We respond to topical issues, social problems and taboo topics, giving tips and flexible guidelines on how to teach about them. The idea behind the Schools that Change the World programme is easy to implement and disseminate – if teachers follow the methodological guides or other tips, they can build social and civic competences and develop pro-democratic and pro-European values in their pupils.

SLOVENIA

Project to help Ukrainian orphans and refugees

Application submitted by Ljudmila NOVAK, Franc BOGOVIČ, Dr Klemen GROŠELJ, Dr Milan BRGLEZ and Romana TOMC, Members of the European Parliament

Aid project for Ukrainian orphans and refugees who lost everything because of Russian aggression.

Organised by Sandi Curk, the project has brought Ukrainian children and adult refugees to Slovenia. Through Mr Curk's efforts, two reception centres have been opened in Postojna: a home for orphans and a housing facility for adult refugees. The project to organise the rescue of these orphans and refugees required an extraordinary effort, inventiveness and knowledge of the crisis.

Sandi Curk is a commander of the Regional Civil Protection Headquarters for Notranjska, a philanthropist, volunteer and humanitarian to his core and a great man. He helped the Slovenian Government Office for the Care and Integration of Migrants overcome the major obstacles to setting up a home for children and the refugee facility.

As a result, 120 Ukrainian refugees have found a second home in Slovenia. Mothers with minor children are housed in Postojna. Sandi Curk handled all aspects of the care and coordination for their reception and accommodation.

His role as coordinator between the local authorities, state institutions and the government office at the start of the war was also indispensable in other Slovenian municipalities. The project to help Ukrainian orphans and refugees is based on common European values and is an example of European solidarity in action. It highlights the close connections between European nations and demonstrates a high degree of solidarity among EU citizens with the victims of the war in Ukraine.

As a committed humanitarian, Mr Curk has also taken action on his own initiative in response to other tragic events: in 1992-1995, he organised the transfer and accommodation of 2 700 refugees from Bosnia; and in 1997 he organised accommodation for 1 000 refugees from Kosovo. At the time of Slovenia's largest ice storm in 2014, when 100 000 residents of Notranjska were left without electricity, he organised rescue and other emergency assistance. His cooperation has also been vital in the recent devastating earthquakes in Croatia and Türkiye.

SPAIN

Trésdesis

Submitted by *Marta FUENTES LABRADOR*

Organisation: *Ayúdame3D*

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Twitter: <https://twitter.com/ayudame3D/>
Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/ayudame3D/>
YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@ayudame3d500>
Website: <https://ayudame3d.org/>
TikTok: <https://www.tiktok.com/@ayudame3d>

Trésdesis are 3D-printed prosthetic arms, which are produced and given free-of-charge to people anywhere in the world who have agenesis of the arms or whose arms have been amputated. The prosthetic arms help reduce the inequality those people face and improve their quality of life, regardless of their circumstances, thereby helping to protect disabled people's rights.

Worldwide, 83 million people who are missing limbs cannot afford a device to help them carry out basic day-to-day tasks (90 000 live in Spain). Ayúdame3D is a Spanish organisation working to advance the social value of technology to help disabled people and vulnerable groups worldwide.

It runs this project to manufacture 3D-printed prosthetic arms called *trésdesis* and provides them to disabled people free-of-charge to reduce the inequality they face, improve their quality of life and give them better work and education opportunities.

Trésdesis prosthetics are entirely mechanical and are capable of prehensile movement activated by the wearer's joints (wrist, elbow or shoulder). All the versions work in a similar way. When the wearer moves their natural joint, a mechanism of nylon strings closes the fingers tightly. When they stop that movement, rubber components return the fingers to their initial position.

Ayúdame3D has also introduced another major innovation to the world of 3D-printed prosthetics: the *trésdesis* designed for people missing an elbow is the first 3D-printed prehensile prosthetic arm that does not require electronics.

More than 500 *trésdesis* prosthetics have been delivered since the project began in order to improve the lives and rights of those who have received them.

CHANGING MINDS

Submitted by Maria SERRANO GONZALEZ

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This cultural exchange project is aimed at young people who have fewer opportunities and are from (economically) developed countries and young refugees who are living in Spain and come from a range of countries. Over nine days, the youngsters come together exchanging knowledge and points of view, bringing their cultures closer together. This helps take the emphasis off the differences between them, easing the integration process for the refugees and shedding a more positive light on immigration in richer countries.

Objectives:

- Reducing the cultural difficulties the refugees experience, such as racial barriers;
- Helping them to learn Spanish through communication with their peers;
- Boosting equality and inclusion for the refugees through their participation in the project and social interaction;
- Making the other participants more aware of the refugees' situation, thus improving their integration;
- Promoting dialogue between young people from different backgrounds;
- Promoting the values of freedom, tolerance, equality and respect;
- Boosting critical thinking among young Europeans;
- Raising awareness of the refugee crisis in Europe;
- Providing linguistic support to help the refugees integrate.

Unfortunately, we are going through a humanitarian crisis of refugees from many countries around the world.

At the moment, we are particularly affected by a war on our doorstep, which is resulting in many Ukrainian refugees arriving in our country. In addition to this, many other countries are still going through very difficult times in which their citizens are not able to provide themselves with the basic necessities, and this is why they feel the need to leave their countries in the worst circumstances we can imagine.

Even though many of them have not managed to achieve their goal of getting to Europe, many others have. We feel the moral obligation to help these people in every way that we can.