

EUROPEAN GUIDE FOR CIVIL DIALOGUE

Collection of good practices in old, recent and new countries of the European Union. (Belgium-France-Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria-Romania)

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The World of
NGOs

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pentru participare public 



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EUROPEAN GUIDE
FOR
CIVIL DIALOGUE

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The present guide is the result of the work of seven civil society organisations across Europe who joined their efforts and their commitment to promote public participation and civil dialogue with the European Project “Fostering Civil Dialogue in Europe”. The guide comprises a collection of civil dialogue experiences and cases gathered from 6 countries across Europe, insights gained during the project and analyses and recommendations put forward by partner organisations within the project.

The guide aims at becoming a tool but at the same time a source of inspiration for anyone interested in understanding or initiating civil dialogue: citizens with regard to decision making processes affecting their lives, representatives of civil society organisations, grassroots organisations, representatives of public institutions interested to broaden their knowledge and understanding on the issue, economic actors.

The 18 cases collected and presented in this volume show that civil dialogue can be a powerful and efficient instrument for change when it is well planned and organised and when the right actors are engaged. The manner in which experiences were identified and collected as enabled us to cover a wide variety of spheres where civil dialogue has been initiated. This way, each partner was given the task to look for 5 experiences or initiatives of civil dialogue at local or national level and to analyse them. Selecting 3 out of 5 initiatives was a difficult task as all of them were valuable. A final list of 18 cases was finally distilled and included in the guide.

We hope that their publication will help readers to make use of the experience gained by the wide range of people involved in civil dialogue initiatives and processes. Therefore the role of the cases is not to just “tell a story”. They are meant to help us think about why a particular method or approach has worked in a particular situation, and how the lessons from it could be applied elsewhere.

The cases all have the same structure – partners or actors involved in the dialogue, the sphere where civil dialogue was initiated, goals of the dialogue initiative, description of the action, methods used, results obtained, analysis and evaluation of the experience and lessons learned. By using a common format to research, write and present the case studies, we hope to have managed to identify and emphasize the factors and conditions that were essential for success. We also expect that the case studies will assist and guide many initiatives and processes of civil dialogue during their planning or evaluation.

Last but not least, we hope that a wide range of people involved in experiences similar to the ones described in the guide will feel inspired and stimulated by this publication to write their own examples of civil dialogue initiatives. In this sense Pour la Solidarité and its partners are willing to offer support in analyzing and sharing practice experiences in the field of civil dialogue or participatory democracy.



PROJECT PRESENTATION

PROJECT PRESENTATION

FOSTERING CIVIL DIALOGUE IN EUROPE. Mutual learning among civil society organisations from older, recent and new Member States.

This European project is based on solid partnership between civil society organisations belonging to old Member States (Austria, Belgium and France), recent Member States (Hungary) and new Member States (Romania and Bulgaria) motivated to join their efforts in order to reflect on and to promote civil dialogue as an essential means or condition for participatory democracy and active citizenship.

WHY THIS PROJECT?

The concept of civil dialogue is quite a new principle at national and European levels in contrast with social dialogue. Despite its novelty as a concept, it has always been a condition for European membership, as a means to foster an active European citizenship and to promote European values. The growing number of emerging civil dialogue initiatives at all levels (local, regional, national, European) revealed that there are certain difficulties to be tackled for a smoother development: legislation that hinders civil dialogue initiatives, low level citizens awareness of their rights, lack of management abilities among employees of public institutions.

This project aims at exploring the concept of civil dialogue by mapping and analysing its manifestations as experienced by various civil society organisations in Europe. The analyses, reflections and insights produced and gathered throughout the project have been included in the present guide. Considering that civil society has developed and got structured in different ways in the different parts of Europe, the project is focused on comparing experiences and good practices in older Member States (before 2004), recent Member States (after 2004) and new Member States (2007).

The final objectives of the project are: to foster a transnational debate and reflection on active citizenship in Europe through civil dialogue, to reinforce civil society organisations in their role as intermediaries and to provide knowledge and understanding of the situation of civil society in new Member States by means of an exchanging learning methodology.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES:

- * Organising **three European working meetings** in order to carry out a collective analysis of civil dialogue between partners as well as with experts, representatives of civil society organisations and citizens through dialogue and exchanges. Each meeting has a special objective regarding the development of the research methodology for the study.
- * Producing a **bilingual (French/English) publication**: an educational and training Guide presenting various civil dialogue practices. The guide will provide representatives of civil society organisations and others with tangible and basic tools to understand what civil dialogue is about and how to develop it at all levels;
- * Creating a **European bilingual website** on citizenship and participation that will provide citizens, civil society organisations and all actors interested in these matters with information, articles, good practices, and contact data on civil dialogue across Europe;
- * Issuing **two European bilingual and electronic newsletters** on civil dialogue and participation across Europe;
- * Setting up a **European network** of civil society organisations specialised in active citizenship and participation that will be able to disseminate the good practices collected and the lessons drawn from the project and to contribute to fostering an active European citizenship and a powerful civil society around Europe.

PROJECT PARTNERS

EUROPEAN THINK TANK POUR LA SOLIDARITÉ (PLS)



The European Think Tank Pour la Solidarité (PLS) is the coordinator of the project. Its mission is to contribute to building a European Union that fosters sustainable and solidarity based development. The goal of Pour la Solidarité is to provide its partners with the tools needed to anticipate and react effectively to European issues.

Pour la Solidarité aims to play an active role in the following areas: formulate sustainable public policies, increase companies' interest in Corporate social responsibility (CRS), promote social economy and encourage citizens to take part in decision making processes in order to address emerging challenges and contribute to the construction of a coherent and human social policy in Europe.

To fulfill its mission and achieve its goal, Pour la Solidarité has been committed from the very beginning to four issues of crucial importance to society today and in the future:

Social cohesion and social economy: solidarity based employment policies, social entrepreneurship, and liberalisation of social services of general interest in Europe.

Diversity and Corporate social responsibility (CSR): diversity policies, gender equality, intercultural dialogue.

Citizenship and participatory democracy: organised civil society, citizens' participation, the role of non-profit organisations.

Sustainable territorial development: sustainable housing, urban policy, social ecology, new town jobs.

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THE WORLD OF NGOS, AUSTRIA



«The World of NGOs» is an Austrian NGO working to inform and assist the activities of nonprofit organisations in Austria. The World of NGOs is an information and networking platform for Austrian associations and other voluntary organisations focusing on the development of civil society and European integration issues.

Through international partnerships it has been active in numerous European projects and citizens' activities.

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PROJECT PARTNERS



FOUNDATION PACT – PARTNERSHIP FOR COMMUNITY ACTION AND TRANSFORMATION

Foundation PACT is a non-governmental and non-profit organisation registered in March 2006, which aims to contribute to sustainable development of communities through promoting local and regional initiatives, partnership and social responsibility. Foundation PACT provides training, consultancy and small funding to community groups and organizations interested to develop community projects and enterprises aimed to contribute to the development of their communities.

Foundation PACT serves as a link between community organizations, individuals and enterprises interested in contributing to community development projects, initiates research studies in the field of community development and social economy and promotes them to students and practitioners interested in these topics and

organises seminars and conferences in the field of community development and social economy, in order to facilitate experience exchange and partnerships

Foundation PACT is based in Bucharest and carries out activities in rural and urban communities in the Oltenia and Muntenia regions of Southern Romania.

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INITIATIVES EUROPE CONSEIL

Initiatives Europe Conseil's main mission is to give access to European Union policies and programmes for civil society throughout Europe. IEC is a free space of self-training, skills and knowledge reciprocation. Our functioning is based on participation and transparency.

Our main goals are the promotion of cultural, social and economic exchanges between European civil society organisations, the networking of European civil society and non profit organisations and the dissemination of European information.

We provide two types of activities:

- **European project engineering** through supporting for European program choice and partner research in Europe, technical support for financial request to the European Union, follow up

of European project implementation.

- **European training and events** using animation and active pedagogical technics, information and courses on European topics.

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PROJECT PARTNERS

CERE - RESOURCE CENTER FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION



CeRe is a non-governmental, not-for-profit and non-partisan Romanian Foundation. The Center is the independent continuation of the civic programme of the National Democratic Institute (NDI) in Romania. Through the NDI civic programme, the members and staff of CeRe, assisted organisations in conducting advocacy campaigns both in Romania and worldwide.

The mission of CeRe is to support NGOs and public institutions in acquiring the principles and applying the methods of public participation. To fulfil its mission, CeRe assists NGOs and public institutions, so that:

NGOs know and apply the principles and methods of public participation, by mobilising and empowering their constituencies;

NGOs contribute to the development and implementation of public policies;

Public institutions know and apply the principles and methods of public participation by involving NGOs and communities in designing, implementing and monitoring public policies;

Public institutions are held accountable by citizens and organisations.

CeRe provides training, consultations, information, on-site assistance and coaching, process facilitation and small grants to NGOs and public administration in their public participation efforts.

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THE NON-PROFIT INFORMATION AND TRAINING CENTRE (NIOK) FOUNDATION



NIOK was founded in 1993 with the aim of strengthening civil society in Hungary through the activities of non-governmental organisations, and setting up a support system that facilitates their long-term operation. NIOK devises programmes that improve the work of organisations, enhance their professionalism and effectiveness and strengthen the third sector's links to local government, the business sector and society as a whole. NIOK is an open foundation, certified as a prominently public-benefit organisation under the relevant legislation.

NIOK's main projects and programmes are: information on nonprofits and for nonprofits (including Hungary's most-used civil portal called www.nonprofit.hu, an NGO newsletter in Hungarian, open database of NGOs in Hungary, media monitoring and a hot line service to answer the questions of those interested in NGO issues), social responsibility, philanthropy development

(promoting 1% regulation, researching on similar 1-2% philanthropy systems in the region, an awards programme to promote socially responsible attitudes by highlighting good examples) and Non-profit Service Center (providing training and counselling round table discussions with business and state actors, information, publishing guidebooks, information and education leaflets, and a non-profit library service)

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PROJECT PARTNERS

CENTRE FOR SOCIAL PRACTICES (CSP)



centre for social practices

Set up in 1994 and quickly becoming one of Bulgaria's leading civil society "think-action" tanks, dedicated to issues of representation, participation, inclusion and citizenship, in 1996 the Centre for Social Practices (CSP) was invited to join the new Bulgarian University as a full Department.

Project-relevant specialisations of the CSP, both as NGO and Department, include: policy development in inter-cultural education; teaching in inter-cultural education; curricula development. Apart from significant ongoing media coverage and ready access to decision-making government levels, the CSP enjoys nationwide esteem with the minority groups, particularly – the Roma, Turkish and "Pomak" minorities.

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INTRODUCTION TO CIVIL DIALOGUE

CIVIL DIALOGUE AND THE BROAD PICTURE

The present chapter intends to explore the concept of civil dialogue and its developments at European level. The experience and insights gained during the project “Fostering Civil Dialogue in Europe” when analysing the available literature on civil dialogue proves that the concept is mainly used at European level, by EU institutions and NGOs acting at the European level and very little at regional or national levels.

As defined by the EU Civil Society Contact Group, civil dialogue describes an interaction between public institutions and civil society organisations. It goes beyond information and communication, and is based on mutual recognition and responsiveness. It covers various degrees of formalisation, ranging from informal to legally recognised structures, from ad hoc to continuous exchange¹.

As civil dialogue is considered to be a tool of participatory democracy, any endeavour of understanding it should start by looking into what democracy is and which are the various forms it can take. The form of democracy best known in our era is representative democracy – a set of rules for public institutions in which citizens choose their representatives through elections. When looking at the effects of these democratic institutions’ actions on the people’s lives or the demos, we can consider that there is a need for improvement. Yet, the demos or the political community is not very active and this translates into low numbers of people participating to elections or to membership of political parties. In addition to this, political parties instead of facilitating participation and access to political life act sometimes as gatekeepers, especially in relation to marginalised members of society².

1 www.act4europe.org/code/en/policy.asp?Page=238&menuPage=214

2 Fazi, E. and Smith, J. Civil Dialogue: Making it Work Better – Study commissioned by the Civil Society Contact Group, 2006, p 12 <http://act4europe.horus.be/module/FileLib/Civil%20dialogue%2C%20making%20it%20work%20better.pdf>

This general atmosphere of mistrust and disconnection between people and their elected representatives has led critics of modern democracy to assert that the system is facing a crisis and that more participatory elements complementing the representative democracy system should be established³.

In addition to this, as Susan Rose-Ackerman states, citizens’ participation to policy making plays an important role in the making of democracy. Thus “democracy means more than elections, political party organisation, and the protection of individual rights. It also means that policy making is accountable to the public and that officials do not use their offices corruptly for private gain. ... full democracy cannot be attained unless the policy-making process is accountable to citizens through transparent procedures that seek to incorporate public input. In a democracy, individuals and institutions must justify the exercise of power over others, and success in an election is insufficient to make this claim. Thus, when policy is made inside the government and the bureaucracy, those making the decisions must learn from individuals, firms, and other organizations what is at stake.”⁴

Democracy becomes a more complicated issue when analysed and discussed at the European level. Representative democracy at the European level is based on an ad-hoc approach, a mixture of different models, combining three main features reflected in its ‘institutional triangle’: technocracy (European Commission), intergovernmentalism (the Council of Ministers and the European Council) and parliamentarism (direct representation of the European People

3 Beger, Nicolas, Participatory Democracy: Organised Civil Society and the ‘New Dialogue’, paper published in Great Britain by The Federal Trust for Education and Research, 2004 www.fedtrust.co.uk/eu_constitution

4 Ackerman, S.R., From Elections to Democracy in Central Europe: Public Participation and the Role of Civil Society, in East European Politics and Societies, 2007;21;31

through the European parliament)⁵. Due to its complex nature and to the change of power among the three institutions over time, it is very difficult to delineate the fundamental nature of EU democracy. In the beginning the predecessor of the European Commission – The High Authority – was the basis of the European Coal and Steel Community but over time it was gradually substituted by the Council of Ministers who became the key actor in the EU policy making process. The European Parliament has also significantly extended its legislative power during the past 20 years⁶.

When using the definition of democracy given by Ackerman to analyse the democratic process and its manifestations at the European level, policy making is an aspect which stands out as very unsatisfactory. The French and the Dutch referenda on the Constitutional Treaty proved that there is a serious disconnection between citizens and policy makers at European level.

CIVIL DIALOGUE AND SOCIAL DIALOGUE

Civil dialogue resembles to a certain extent social dialogue. Therefore to avoid any confusion it is important to explore the main distinctions between the two concepts. According to the International Labour Organisation social dialogue “includes all types of negotiation, consultation or simply exchange of information between, or among, representatives of governments, employers and workers, on issues of common interest relating to economic and social

policy”⁷. Social dialogue is considered to be a consultation mechanism used in the process of policy making at EU level. The difference is that it applies “to a limited number of policy processes, mostly employment-related, and is based on the interaction between clearly identified types of actors”⁸.

Social dialogue brings together European social partners (unions, employers and the group of nationalised industries), covers everything that affects the world of work and has more powers than a mere consultative status.

Civil dialogue brings together civil society organisations and covers everything but the world of work. There is inevitably some overlap between the two but both NGOs and social partners want their procedures to remain totally distinct⁹.

CIVIL DIALOGUE AND CIVIL SOCIETY

One of the difficulties encountered when dealing with civil dialogue is the definition of civil society itself. Some people define it as being anything but the State, thus including businesses; others define it as being anything but the State or the market. However, no one disputes the fact that trade unions are part of civil society¹⁰. The definition used by the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) is “organisational structures whose members serve the public interest through discussion and function as mediators through the public authorities and

7 <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/dialogue/download/brochure.pdf>

8 Fazi, E. and Smith, J. Civil Dialogue: Making it Work Better – Study commissioned by the Civil Society Contact Group, 2006, p 13 <http://act4europe.horus.be/module/FileLib/Civil%20dialogue%2C%20making%20it%20work%20better.pdf>

9 NESTOR J., The issues, in European social dialogue and civil dialogue: differences and complementarities, EESC pamphlet series, Brussels 2003, p9.

10 NESTOR J., The issues, in European social dialogue and civil dialogue: differences and complementarities, EESC pamphlet series, Brussels 2003, p7.

5 Fazi, E. and Smith, J. Civil Dialogue: Making it Work Better – Study commissioned by the Civil Society Contact Group, 2006, p 13 <http://act4europe.horus.be/module/FileLib/Civil%20dialogue%2C%20making%20it%20work%20better.pdf>

6 Fazi, E. and Smith, J. Civil Dialogue: Making it Work Better – Study commissioned by the Civil Society Contact Group, 2006, p 13 <http://act4europe.horus.be/module/FileLib/Civil%20dialogue%2C%20making%20it%20work%20better.pdf>

INTRODUCTION TO CIVIL DIALOGUE

the state”¹¹. As Dick Oostings puts it, when we talk about civil society, we refer to all the organisations which, in one way or another, act in the general interest, to improve life, whether this relates to social justice, human rights, the environment, etc.

Most of the time, Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) are referred to as the main civil society organisations. Even though there is no agreed straight definition, there is a loose set of characteristics which can be used to define them: firstly they are largely spontaneous organisations (self-starting, self-motivating and self-activating); secondly their membership is voluntary; thirdly they are associative (in terms of attracting affiliation and/or on the delivery side of their activities); fourthly they are non-profit making organisations and finally they are “particularist”, their objectives are limited in scope¹².

Despite these difficulties of definition, NGOs have been generally seen as a “good thing” since the 18th century. Indeed, as Frank Vibert puts it, NGOs enable people, actually and personally to experience social and moral pluralism; they help develop procedures that are generally useful and beneficial for society (spontaneous behaviour being neither the market nor the State) as well as developing civic activism, social solidarity, cooperation and associated qualities of trust and reciprocity. They contribute to the formation of moral or social values by challenging prevailing views and they perform socially or morally desirable functions that official or state bodies cannot perform because they are not seen as linked to the world of officialdom and authority¹³.

11 GREENWOOD J., The world of NGOs and interest representation, in NGOs, Democratisation and the regulatory state, European policy forum, London 2003, p52.

12 VIBERT F., NGOs, Democratisation and the regulatory state, in NGOs, Democratisation and the regulatory state, European policy forum, London 2003, p9-10.

13 VIBERT F., NGOs, Democratisation and the regulatory state, in NGOs, Democratisation and the regulatory state, European policy forum, London 2003, p9-10.

There have been three main steps in the relations between the EU and NGOs. In the 1980s, on the one hand, existing European NGOs created permanent representation platforms to the Institutions and, on the other hand, new social policies of the Union (poverty, women, disabled people, etc.) gave rise to the development of national or regional organisations into European networks of NGOs. In the 1990s, European environmental NGOs structured themselves and obtained from the Council a regulation asserting the necessity, on the one hand, of consultation with these NGOs and on the other hand of providing them financially with what was needed to ensure this consultation. Finally, again during the 1990s, European social NGOs got together and established the Platform of social European NGOs. This Platform was eventually recognised, financed by the European Commission¹⁴ and was consulted on social matters. The document that strongly reinforced participatory democracy and consequently civil dialogue was the European Constitution¹⁵.

As already mentioned, the principle of participatory democracy of the European Constitution project institutionalised civil dialogue; it gave it a legal basis. Even though many argued that the Constitution project lacked provisions to give full expression to this principle of open dialogue with civil society and real measures for implementation, it showed the importance that the Convention placed on civil dialogue as part of the democratic functioning of the EU¹⁶.

The key goal of such civil dialogue is to consolidate democracy, since a genuine democracy is based on continuous and consistent dialogue with civil society, alongside elected representatives’ political dialogue and social dialogue between employers and trade

14 GERHARD O., La dynamique des plateformes associatives européennes, in Associations and emerging Europe, La documentation française, Paris 2001, p115.

15 Idem, p116.

16 DEHAENE J.L., Dialogue at the EU level : analysis of current procedures, in European social dialogue and civil dialogue : differences and complementarities, EESC pamphlet series, Brussels 2003, p14.

unions¹⁷. In that sense, participatory democracy only implies consultation and does not give any legislative power to organised civil society.

However, consultation, if carried out properly, may contribute to the development of new ideas, provide valuable expertise and reconciles the views and concerns of different actors promoting sound policy formulation, implementation and evaluation. An effective participation and consultation requires a climate of trust between involved actors and this can only be achieved when the process is transparent and free from manipulation¹⁸.

Despite the growing importance of civil dialogue, it is very important for social dialogue to be preserved and stimulated. If social dialogue's importance is understated, it is democracy which is to be the main loser because the Union already suffers from a gap between its citizens and its institutions and that gap can only be filled in by both social and civil dialogues¹⁹.

FUTURE PERSPECTIVES. CIVIL DIALOGUE AND THE TREATY OF LISBON

The Lisbon Treaty will replace the European Constitution project. The European Constitution project had been rejected by French and Dutch voters in spring 2005. After the NO vote of Dutch and French citizens, the European Commission had called for a period of reflection that lasted for two years and ended in spring 2007. Meanwhile the ratification of the treaty establishing a

17 OLSSON J., Can NGOs help in the democratisation of the EU ?, in NGOs, Democratisation and the regulatory state, European policy forum, London 2003, p26.

18 BOND, Strengthening European Participatory Democracy, <http://europa.eu.int/comm/governance/contribbond-en.pdf>

19 DELORS J., session plenièrè de cloture de la Conférence Démocratique participative : état et perspectives ouvertes par la Constitution Européenne, Bruxelles 8-9 mars 2004, p5-6.

Constitution for Europe in the Member States was stopped. On the 13th of December 2007 a new treaty for the European Union was signed by the heads of state and governments in Lisbon, therefore called the Lisbon Treaty. The Lisbon Treaty is currently undergoing ratification in the EU Member States and is intended to enter into force on January 1st 2009. The Treaty is still in the process of ratification by the Member States through the national Parliaments but the negative outcome of the Irish referendum in June 2008 created a new setback to the European Union construction.

It is considered that the new Treaty would greatly enhance the Union's capacity to act by increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of its institutions and decision-making mechanisms. Moreover it is expected that it will improve the democratic character of the Union by increasing Parliament's powers, by entrenching the Charter of Fundamental Rights and by strengthening the rule of law²⁰.

Promoters of participation praise the Treaty of Lisbon as participatory democracy is enhanced especially through the right of citizens' initiative which allows at least one million signatures from a significant number of member states to ask the Commission to take a specific initiative. The text reads as follows:

1. The institutions shall, by appropriate means, give citizens and representative associations the opportunity to make known and publicly exchange their views in all areas of Union action.
2. The institutions shall maintain an open, transparent and regular dialogue with representative associations and civil society.
3. The European Commission shall carry out broad consultations with parties concerned in order to ensure that the Union's actions are coherent and transparent.
4. Not less than one million citizens who are

20 DUFF, A., True Guide to the Treaty of Lisbon, <http://www.alde.eu/fileadmin/files/Download/True-Guide-NEW.pdf>

nationals of a significant number of Member States may take the initiative of inviting the European Commission, within the framework of its powers, to submit any appropriate proposal on matters where citizens consider that a legal act of the Union is required for the purpose of implementing the Treaties. (...)

In addition to this, the Lisbon Treaty strengthens the powers of the European Parliament. The European Parliament will have more legislative power in more policy areas. On the EU budget the Parliament will have equal right to decide as the Council (= Member State's governments). The Parliament will elect the President of the European Commission.

The Charter of Fundamental Rights becomes legally binding except for the United Kingdom and Poland. The Charter includes rights such as the freedom of expression and assembly, the protection of personal data, the right to education, the equality of women and men, the right to fair working conditions and many more. These democratic progress were integrated and maintained in the last two European Treaties. We can hope that it will remain so in the next Treaty proposal. We, citizens, civil society, should be vigilant for that.

METHODOLOGY

To enable readers to have an informed view of this work, an outline of the methodology used to collect civil dialogue experiences, and put together their analyses, is essential to us.

Indeed, to take an interest in the organisation of the various forms of civil dialogue in several countries of the European Union involves formulating a common language and coordinating the phases of collecting these “experiences.”

As such, according to the particular dynamic of a transnational project of this scope, these phases were as follows:

PERFECTING A WORK METHOD

The partner Pour la Solidarité (coordinator of the project) has put forward the overall framework for action for each partner. This work basis has been approved by everyone through the formal commitment in the project submitted to the European Commission for the 2007 call for proposals of “Citizens for Europe” programme.

Subsequently, methodology has developed throughout the project, and in particular during the three partnership meetings which have enabled the perfecting of collection tools, the specifying of key terms and deciding together what a best practice is and also how successful outcomes can be defined.

The first meeting was held in Vienna in October 2007, to discuss the concept of Civil dialogue between partners and to formulate a common conceptual language including keywords which enable each person, without forgetting the unique nature of his/her territorial context, to grasp the objectives of the study. This debate was put to good use by considering a common way of collecting successful experiences. That of the questionnaire was retained¹. A second public meeting took place in Bucharest in March, 2008 in order to present the first successful experiences to an audience

of representatives of NGO, ministries, citizens and journalists.

The latest meeting was held in Brussels in May, 2008, with the aim of selecting out collected experiences for the publication of a guide. Work on analysis and the results to retain from all the experiences collected, was also carried out in order to make constructive recommendations for future actors involved in Civil Dialogue in Europe.

COLLECTION OF THE BEST PRACTICES

We have thus decided to proceed using a paper and interview survey run by each of our partners in his own national territory: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Hungary and Romania.

The priority of the project partners was to gather “the word of the people,” the experiences lived out by civil society actors, in order to be as close as possible to the reality of the dialogue and to enable a real appropriation of experiences by future readers and internauts.

A table of thirty questions decided upon at the time of the partnership’s creation has thus served as a basis for the co-construction of a shorter questionnaire (8 questions) which enabled us rapidly to identify experiences of interesting, original and diversified civil dialogue.

The lay-out of this questionnaire recaptures the more complex one of the initial questionnaire and revolves around 8 open questions about the project’s objectives, its undertaking, its method of implementation, the reasons for its implementation, the partners associated with the experience, the results obtained and the auto-evaluation of the results.

To refine the job of analysing the methods of Civil Dialogue, a second questionnaire (37 questions) enables one to go further in the survey, and has been used to capitalise on the relevant experiences which figure in this guide today.

¹ The questionnaire is in annex 2

The questionnaire's lay-out is in 7 parts.

The first part's primary purpose is collection of general information about the respondent: his/her status, geographical location and asks the respondent to give his/her definition of Civil Dialogue.

The second part asks for a brief description by the respondent of the civil dialogue carried out. The third and fourth parts explore the operational and organisational aspects of the experience by the partnership. The fifth and sixth parts of the questionnaire enquire about the methodological tools used during the civil dialogue action/process and those selected for its evaluation. Finally, the last part, which is more open, asks the respondent to comment on his experience.

Its open and semi-open questions enable each partner to conduct discussions in a semi-directive manner with respondents selected and identified as actors in civil dialogue.

This questionnaire was subsequently used or distributed by each of the partners respectively in their country. The collection of data was carried out from November, 2007 to May, 2008. The framework of the Study "Fostering Civil Dialogue in Europe" specified a minimum collection of 5 experiences by partners to appear on the website, of which three will then be chosen as "success stories" and published in this guide.

A French and English version of the questionnaire has been offered to the partners. In the final document, it is possible that some of the subtlety and precision of the vocabulary used during the discussions might be lost in translation.

The partners have decided to draft a written work in order to better present experiences of Civil Dialogue in Europe so as to complete the survey project and to enable the readers to effectively understand and appropriate the experiences in this guide or on the website.

Thus, in a table divided into 12 categories, the "best practices" are explained. The parties successively fill in under the heading of Civil Dialogue Experience, the partners involved in the process, the location of the experience,

project dates, the subject covered by this civil dialogue, the aim of the experience, the description of the project and its methodology, the results obtained, their analyses and evaluation, the lessons to be learned from the experience in question, and finally, the contact details of the person questioned.

SELECTING BEST PRACTICES

The entire job of methodological construction has the aim to enable transversal reading of civil dialogue initiatives at European level and bring out the relevant points indicative of "good practice" at local and national level.

In the partnership involved in this project, it has been decided not to draw up a list of selection criteria for local civil dialogue initiatives. Each partner was free to put forward the questionnaire to the persons/organisation of his choice, favouring those in each respective professional network.

We agreed that the survey would proceed looking for various, local experiences. However, this freedom of choice implies dispersion in the typology of civil dialogue methods and does not, a priori, allow for systematic analysis from a pre-determined categorisation.

Nevertheless, for creating this guide, the actors in the "Fostering Civil Dialogue in Europe" project wanted to see a wide variety of experimentations in order for this collection to become a source of creative ideas for citizens and institutions and thus meet the two fundamental approaches to civil dialogue, "top-down" and bottom-up"².

FOR THE ANALYSIS OF EXPERIENCES

By putting a preference on professional people as respondents at the start of the survey, it must be emphasised that spontaneous initiatives by citizen groups are less represented. In

² See in the glossary

METHODOLOGY

the analysis of experiences, there should be differentiation made between experiences entering into a “project” initiative, i.e. limited in time, with a start and an end and those whose framework has been adopted as a work and performance principle in which dialogue continues and endures.

Finally, the objective of this guide is to encourage the reader to read the responses which we have made in an inductive and qualitative manner. Our analysis is not based on a statistically representative panel, but on a choice made by the partners who considered that the data gathered in each questionnaire were indicative of success and effectiveness.

EUROPEAN GOOD PRACTICES

INTRODUCTION

At the end of a journey through the new Member-States (Romania and Bulgaria), recent ones (Hungary) and those well-established (Austria, Belgium and France) and via 18 actual examples, we will help you become acquainted with the richness and imagination of these men and women involved in civil society.

The examples brought together here present dialogue situations occurring in different contexts: in Belgium, an association has rallied the residents to renew their own quarter; in Romania, there is a collective, the Platform for Development of Civil Society, which has started negotiations with public authorities to enable NGOs to have access to European Structural Funds. In Austria, the government has solicited the help of citizens to protect and manage forest regions.

From now on, the reader will be able to appreciate the concerns unique to each country and which have required mediation through a Civil Dialogue approach.

Thus, from action on the ground to negotiations at the highest level, there is a wide range of possibilities which vary according to different formats and procedures.

However, we can ask ourselves whether these practices are “good,” by going beyond the expression “good practices.” What appeared to be important to us was to find out if these methods have been successful and then highlight them. Indeed, in our opinion, it is the results which are most significant: these are equally victories for the people who have taken part. They help to strengthen their sense of citizenship, but most importantly, in certain cases, these achievements can improve daily life and make their mark on the landscape on a long-term basis, whether this be the building of a care centre for autistic children (Bulgaria and Hungary) or a change in public finance policy. In any case, attitudes and mentalities are often called into question on issues which are too

often concealed.

With the aim of establishing a form of dialogue, albeit remote, between these practices and those of the readers, we have decided to present the experiences in the format of tables with distinct categories: Description, Methodology, Results, Analysis and Evaluation, Lessons to be Drawn and Contacts.

Comparing experiences, problems, methods and solutions, is to step back and see things from another angle: if such a strategy worked for them, why not for you ?


Experiences can be shared and compared with one another at the European level, maybe only because of a cumulative knowledge process, citizens, civil society organisations and public bodies will manage to avoid pit-falls and tension.

As such, sources of inspiration are not lacking in these examples of civic participation. Above all, do not hesitate to contact the people who have taken part, either closely or at a distance, in these experiences, to discuss, get advice and, why not create a European project together...

CASE STUDIES

Austria, case 1



TITLE	FOREST DIALOGUE	
PARTNERS	<p>The partners taking part in this project were: Bundesministerium für Land und Forstwirtschaft, Umwelt und Wasserwirtschaft (Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management), IV/1 – Abteilung für Waldpolitik und Waldinformation (Department for Forest Policy) and about 80 organisations and institutions interested in forest issues.</p> <p>The project took place in the form of a structured dialogue between those partners.</p>	
PLACE	<p>The project was implemented on a national level in Austria. Most of the meetings took place in Vienna, some other meetings were held in the regions.</p>	
DATE	<p>Launched in April 2003 by the Federal Minister for Agriculture Forestry, Environment and Water Management, Josef Pröll, the Forest Dialogue was originally programmed until 2005. The programme has continued beyond this date and is ongoing.</p>	
AREA	<p>National forest programme.</p>	
GOALS (Question to answer with the civil dialogue)	<p>The aim of the Forest Dialogue was to develop a comprehensive national forest programme in which concrete proposals for political action on all major forest issues would be presented. The forest programme should make a significant contribution towards implementation of the Austrian sustainability strategy.</p> <p>Austrian forests are at risk of serious damage. A sustainable improvement of the situation requires all the stakeholders to take concrete action, in hunting, forestry, pasturing and recreation, as well as cooperation and dialogue between the groups. The Forest Dialogue set a suitable framework for the development of strategies against the damages. The Forest dialogue concept followed the international idea of developing national forest programmes at the UN-conference on Environment and Development, in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro.</p> <p>The partnership should enable a joint effort of all national institutions, public and private interest groups linked to the forest development to change the situation for the better. In order to be able to cope with the diverse interest in the utilisation of forests in future, all forest stakeholders were called upon to further develop responsible forest management. For this purpose, the Federal Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management initiated a broad-based dialogue process.</p>	



Austria, case 1

<p>DESCRIPTION</p>	<p>All the interest groups concerned were integrated in a platform, using a structured process for information and debates : “The forest concerns us all”, was the leading slogan when all forest stakeholders were invited to participate actively in the Forest Dialogue.</p> <p>At the module meetings, experts presented keynote statements on the subjects as the basis for discussion and for the development of strategies, targets and concrete implementation measures. In the second stage analysis took place, conflicts of interest and opinions were debated, problems were identified. Between individual module meetings working papers on “status quo, trends and problems” were sent to all participants and published on the Intranet. Additionally, participants were also invited to submit their proposed measures in a written questionnaire. Some areas of interest were studied in more detail in workshops, the results were integrated in the work of the modules.</p> <p>The results of this process formed the core of the first Austrian Forest Programme.</p> <p>Representatives of interest groups were invited, the choice was up to the organisations, but only one representative could take part because of the high amount of 80 organisations and institutions.</p>
<p>METHODS</p>	<p>An open and transparent consultation process was chosen for the method. Besides the representatives of the federal government and of the 9 Austrian provinces, interest groups representing forest owners, the wood and paper industry, hunting, tourism, nature conservation organisations and all other NGOs, research institutions, trade unions, as well as the general public were invited to take part in the process. The events usually lasted 1 or 2 days.</p> <p>Clear rules and structures were defined in order to be efficient. The heart of the process was the “Round Table”, to which about 80 forest-relevant institutions and interest groups active at the national level had been invited. This was where the thematic and political balancing of interests took place. The technical groundwork for the Round Table was carried out in subject-related modules, covering the subjects “Protection Forest and Forest Protection”, “Forest and Management”, and “Environment and Society”.</p> <p>A co-ordination group served as a link between the Round Table and the modules, summarising module results and input from public events as well as contributions from Internet, responsible also for presenting the results of the Round Table in written reports to the public. Groups not represented at the Round Table or in the modules could participate via the Internet platform www.walddialog.at or in written statements to the organiser. The website provided the public with information and offered a forum for discussion. In addition, public events, the “Forest Fora” were organised and open for public.</p> <p>Reports and minutes of meetings were presented to the participants and the public.</p> <p>The procedures were well planned ahead, the power of decision stayed with the authorities, they wanted to keep the responsibility for any final decisions. These limits to participation were made clear from the authorities in the beginning of the process.</p> <p>This was the first time that an authority had offered broad participation, so expectations were quite open.</p> <p>An evaluation process at the end of the planning process was foreseen. This evaluation was based on the feedback of the questionnaire, at the events the feedback was moderated in the closing phase.</p>



Austria, case 1

<p>RESULTS</p>	<p>As a result, although there were high expectations from the organisers, the participatory progress at the Round table stayed sometimes at the surface, as this process was set up for the first time and the interest groups as well as the authorities had to develop some standards. But in the modules there was real progress and a new culture of debating developed.</p> <p>The Forest Dialogue should shape forest policy in Austria in the short, medium and long term. The results should serve all decision-makers addressed within the scope of the proposals as guiding principles for their actions, as a voluntary communication and decision-making process, the order of which is not prescribed or regulated by law. So all ideas were taken up, many ideas were debated and many ideas could be realised in different areas.</p> <p>There were difficult times in the project, where the dynamics because of the many participants were quite challenging. But at one stage, an old woodsman stated, that this was the first of thousands of public debates he had attended about forest issues where he could see a real effect – although the methods of moderating feedback, working with flipcharts and moderation cards was new for many of them, they accepted this “modern ways” of finding consensus and developed a new culture of expressing opinions, managing different interests and debating. Many people from the very conservative field of forestry issues were reluctant in the beginning that “co-operation” methods would work in the shaping of a common policy for the diverse interests of forests. But they had to admit that it worked.</p> <p>Even if the people involved did not call the process of communication and participation of citizens in the meetings ‘civil dialogue’, they felt that this was a new approach in asking not only for their opinion but really taking it into account.</p>
<p>ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION</p>	<p>The process was quite open and tried to involve as many people concerned as possible. All together, 80 organisations and institutions were involved in the Round Table, a coordinating body was defined in the Ministry, so there was a clear commitment from the authorities as well. All interest groups were invited to join.</p> <p>The objectives have been reached. Some of the expectations were probably too high in the beginning but in the end, the result is very positive because a process of dialogue with interest groups has started.</p> <p>The openness of the forum was important for the basic and common understanding. The works were in the first place developed in the modules and have led to a very good networking process that is still noticeable.</p> <p>It became clear that the participants had experienced a new way of participation in shaping a policy. But also the representatives of the authorities and administration had undergone a huge development. Although this did not please everyone, most felt that the change would help in the advancement of their own work.</p>



Austria, case 1

LESSONS TO LEARN

A real civil dialogue does not have to come to an end when a process like the national forest programme is completed. A new circle can be started: "What do we know now, what do we need now?"

Everyone involved in the process has learned a lot. It is known now, how a structured dialogue can be processed, how it should be processed and what to do with the discrepancy of aim and reality. A model has been developed and it will be kept up for further dialogue.

The importance of a strong political will for a broad acceptance in the public has become clear. Without this declaration in the beginning and during the process - especially in the very challenging phases - the principle of a forest dialogue would not have been successful.

In the beginning, some of the groups - such as the proprietors of forests - seemed to be very opposed to the idea of an open dialogue because they feared to lose their "power". This made it quite difficult to include other interest groups. But in the end, a networking atmosphere and working process was reached and the working group still meets twice a year in a very constructive way.

The feedback has shown us that the initiative was appreciated.

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Austria, case 2



TITLE	DIALOGUE WITH NGOs 
PARTNERS	<p>The partners in this project were the State Government of Lower Austria with its office of the State Minister responsible for women affairs, family affairs, social and labour market issues and EU affairs and NGOs active in different policy fields, mainly women affairs and social issues, but also regional affairs, youth and education.</p>
PLACE	<p>The project had a regional scope, covering the region of Lower Austria, but also had a European perspective, as the concerned State Minister is also president of the Committee 3 for culture, education and interregional co-operation of the Assembly of European Regions (AER), the largest organisation of interregional co-operation in the EU, representing more than 250 regions.</p> <p>The project took place in the whole region of Lower Austria, the meetings were held in the Landhaus St. Pölten, in a government office in the capital city of Lower Austria.</p>
DATE	<p>The consultation processes started in 2003, when the State Minister took over her current position. The consultation developed to an ongoing process.</p>
AREA	<p>The consultation project had no specific official name, but as a working title it was called "Dialogue with NGOs". Thematic policy areas were discussed relating to the core issues of organisations and the State Minister's office.</p>
GOALS (Question to answer with the civil dialogue)	<p>The idea of a dialogue emerged when the State Minister took over her current position with her wish to learn more about local problems and working areas of women NGOs and at the same time some women NGOs addressed their requests to meet the new State Minister.</p> <p>The original idea was to learn about the problems, projects and perspectives of the NGOs working in policy areas which were of important relevance for the state. The expertise of NGOs should help the new State Minister to identify the problems at the regional level.</p> <p>Civil dialogue in that sense was understood as a necessity for preparing valuable information for political decisions, consisting of two-side communication: explaining the interest and the focus of the state and learn about the perspective of the NGOs.</p>



Austria, case 2

<p>DESCRIPTION</p>	<p>The dialogue was held in form of meetings which could have been called for from both sides: NGOs working in a certain policy field were invited to talk about their work, but NGOs could also request a meeting. A date was set and the meeting was held in the office of the State Government.</p> <p>The NGO could send any representative able to explain their perspective. Mostly the responsible person or the project manager with high involvement in decision making was sent.</p>
<p>METHODS</p>	<p>The meetings with the women's organisations usually lasted about two hours. They were accomplished quarterly, according to an arrangement set from both sides.</p> <p>The meetings with women organisations usually started with a short description of the actual situation of the NGOs, e.g. which projects were done and which problems were faced. This description was prepared before the meeting so the State Minister was able to refer with precise information. After explaining the actual focus of the policy field usually a lively discussion evolved.</p> <p>Results of the consultations were manifold but sometimes only realised at a later stage. The information exchange led to a better understanding of the focus, competencies and tasks each partner had and as a result, possible co-operation in projects, direct funding for activities or other forms of support were reached. There was no structured way to report about the outcomes, but minutes of the meeting were processed serving as a basis for the next meeting.</p> <p>The tools developed with time, they happened to be useful and were continued.</p> <p>Every issue could be addressed and could be helpful for shaping a certain policy field. But the responsibility of decision making stayed with the State Minister, so a limit was set concerning the concluding decision.</p> <p>After each meeting the minutes were checked to identify what had been executed or stayed unsolved. Feedback from participants also was counted as a part of the evaluation.</p> <p>The evaluation process was implemented as a part of a standard routine in the State Minister's office.</p>



Austria, case 2

<p>RESULTS</p>	<p>The dialogue was taking place as an information flow for both sides. The women NGOs had established quarterly dialogue meetings. This structure had been made possible, because the head of department for women affairs was offering the coordination of themes to be discussed, prepared the necessary documents and sent out minutes of the meetings where decisions or ideas were documented. The women NGOs were therefore quite involved in this process and they made use of the opportunity to address the State Minister with their needs, visions and requests.</p> <p>Other NGOs visited the office of the Councillor just once for a shorter consultation but stayed in contact with a desk officer of the State Minister by e-mail or telephone. These communication channels were also very helpful for the civil dialogue, as it was possible to communicate wishes or problems in a minimum of time, they would be dealt with in internal meetings, the results were communicated back to the respective NGO via the desk officer again.</p> <p>The information exchanged was used for shaping a policy, the opinion of the decision makers in politics often needed this additional expertise from the field, e.g. when a new law had to be developed or amended. At the same time the NGOs were able to focus more on the outcome of the work relevant for their respective policy field.</p> <p>Problems at local level were better identified, so the consultation had some direct results even for the regions.</p> <p>It is not sure that all participants of the consultation would call the process developed 'civil dialogue', but most of them seemed to realise the importance of exchange of views.</p>
<p>ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION</p>	<p>There was immediate evaluation after each meeting and a follow-up evaluation on the executed issues. The representatives of the most important women's organisations of the region took part in the quarterly meetings, usually 10-12 women, which developed a consistent group.</p> <p>Around 25 other NGOs were reached via project visits of the State Minister and were ad-hoc consulted. The organisation of follow-up meetings was done by the desk officers. Overall, it was a top priority to consult NGOs and it was dealt with by top people.</p> <p>The objectives were fully reached concerning the women organisations, the outcomes usually were perceived very useful for both parties. For the other NGO ad-hoc-meetings, there was no defined structure or evaluation.</p> <p>After the first experiments one can note that closer relationship between the NGOs and the State Minister were established. The understanding of policy fields was growing and helped to see the common targets but also the differences in the perspectives.</p> <p>It is not sure that the involved NGOs recognise the meetings as a citizen activity, but the State Minister definitely saw it this way.</p>



Austria, case 2

LESSONS TO LEARN

The consultation was an ongoing process, grounded on the basis of needs. Those who needed additional information would call for additional consultation.

The policy shaping process largely took profit from these direct contacts with civil society organisations. It can now better refer to visions and needs as well as to practical outcomes. The understanding of the political focus on the other side helped the NGOs to position themselves more clearly either in line or in opposition with the politics which allowed a better grounded discussion. Additionally, politicians were often invited to celebrate milestones in the projects and when there had been a consultation process before, these invitations were much more fruitful for both parties in the end, as they were more oriented to content and not only restricted to formal presentations.

The atmosphere of these consultations was very positive, because a consultation meeting could be called from both sides – it was perceived more as a dialogue as if it would have been just seen as a top down measure!

Expectations often were very high and not every problem could be solved. But none of the invited NGOs ever refused consultation and neither the State Minister refused to be consulted.

The NGO consultation turned out to be useful and valuable for both sides. It will be carried out as long as the partners can see a benefit for them.

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Austria, case 3

TITLE	DIALOGUE FOR PARTICIPATION
PARTNERS	The main partners of this project were the Austrian Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management with their Department for EU-Affairs, Environment and an Austrian environmental NGO, called "ÖGUT, Austrian Society for Environment and Technology", as well as many other NGOs, like The World of NGOs, an Austrian based NGO, serving as an information and networking platform for Third Sector organisations.
PLACE	The organisation's scope area had a national focus, but implementing information from the European Union and whole Europe. The whole Austrian territory was included in the project and there was a strong emphasis not to leave out any regional.
DATE	The dialogue concept was initially started in 2001 and became reality step by step, by establishing a strategic working group in 2002, producing supporting materials for participation of citizens and their organisations in the environmental field. In 2006, a series of "viewpoints" of active persons and organisations were published on the project website, which was another important milestone for the process of dialogue.
AREA	<p>The "dialogue for participation"-project aims to collect and provide information about participation of citizens and their organisations in the frame of sustainable development in Europe. Participation is considered a basic principle of democracy and there is an increased demand of citizens for active participation in shaping policies beside the regulated participation in forms of elections or opinion polls.</p> <p>The dialogue invites engaged people to express their opinions in a wide range of organisations, from grassroot initiatives, lobbying associations to umbrella organisations. It is like an open consultation, where one argument might lead to a response and be discussed in detail.</p> <p>Some NGOs have been involved more deeply to ensure the processing of information at national and lately also for European aspects. Benefits and limits of participation in very different areas of life are shown, explained and discussed, a glossary for each theme is provided to define from the beginning what is spoken about and the background of the forum is the strategic working group, consisting of NGOs and representatives of administration.</p> <p>Most of the proceedings are on a virtual basis, but also seminars, round tables and meetings are hold, to ensure summaries from time to time.</p>
GOALS (Question to answer with the civil dialogue)	<p>The issue addressed originated in an idea of a member of the Ministerial unit "EU-Affairs and Environment" to set up a virtual information platform in the followings of the First Symposium on Environmental Mediation in 2001, with the main focus on environmental mediation. Since then the website has been developed and expanded into a central information facility for the issue of participation in general and sustainable development in particular.</p> <p>The participation dialogue was of interest for both parties, for the NGOs and as well for the involved administration unit. Participation had to be allowed, enabled and structured. For the partners, the partnership made it possible to start a process of involvement by expressing interests, opinions and experiences.</p> <p>Civil dialogue allows citizens via their organisations and associations to get in contact with the State and the administration at all levels, national, regional and European and to influence and shape policies affecting their life.</p>



Austria, case 3

<p>DESCRIPTION</p>	<p>Most of the project information was collected virtually. About quarterly seminars, round tables and meetings were held, oriented to participation in conferences and other events to save time and to use the synergies of assembling with like-minded people. The freedom of expression of different opinions is reached by a very simple structure: A theme is chosen and debated with systematic questions. This allows everyone to explore her or his opinion and prevents to be cut off in a discussion before having had the opportunity to bring in all aspects or different facets of an opinion.</p>
<p>METHODS</p>	<p>The partnership consisted of an ongoing consultation about ways and forms how to reach civil society. At a certain stage of the project, working contracts were established with experts of the NGOs to build up a knowledge resource with basic information and valuable contacts to access to civil society organisations. The meetings were taking place in a sporadic manner, some meetings are arranged in the frame of conferences and seminars and involving new participants. It is an open structure to reach the interested persons, not obliging but inviting people to attend.</p> <p>The virtual meeting place is structured into themes and viewpoints, case histories allow to explore opinions, each section can be responded to and can be used to add information or experiences. Some of the issues are taken up further and brought into the round table and seminar discussions.</p> <p>Each result of discussion leads to a new viewpoint of another expert or actively engaged citizen of an organisation. Like this, the themes – all circulating around the issue of participation but highlighting certain aspects – are looked at different angles.</p> <p>Furthermore, the round tables were interconnected and could be fed by the outcomes of the viewpoints.</p> <p>The tools principles were defined beforehand by the administration, still they also were developed further when implementing the system.</p> <p>One of the advantages of the system is that the participants of the consultation limit themselves in a very democratic and disciplined way. Everyone has the same space and opportunity to express viewpoints, everyone can attend the seminars or conferences and everyone can keep herself or himself informed and up-dated.</p> <p>As concerning restrictions the choice was made for experts or at least active persons, but as it is open for anyone to reply, no-one really can feel excluded.</p> <p>When the tool was set up, an evaluation phase was defined prior to the start of consultation. However, until now, no evaluation has taken place, presumably due to time constraints.</p>



Austria, case 3

<p>RESULTS</p>	<p>The participation process in this dialogue is not a spectacular one, but a very reasonable and useful one. It allows people to get involved and express themselves in a public discussion space and it is used in a structured way. A Chinese proverb is cited to declare the aim of the site: "Explain it to me and I'll forget. Show me how and I'll remember. Let me do it myself and I'll understand." (Lao-Tse) So the dialogue process in this sense is an open one and learning results should be expected by all readers and participants.</p> <p>Opinions are expressed from different angles. If they are taken up or not, is still not visible, this might be another step to evaluate, but we consider the process to have started.</p> <p>Still a certain kind of knowledge transfer is taking place when viewpoints are read and discussed. It depends a lot on the engagement of each individual person if she or he takes up, but there is certainly a regional effect as many standpoints or contributions are coming from people from the region, especially from those joining the round tables.</p> <p>The concept of civil dialogue might have not been encountered yet as the system was set up as an instrument of participation and the responding part from administration is not very exposed. So to be perceived as a real dialogue, more representatives from administration have to come out and get into the light of the discussion. But from the side of the NGOs it is clearly seen as a civil dialogue concept and very much appreciated.</p>
<p>ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION</p>	<p>The participation dialogue has resulted in a broad range of aspects. Any engaged actor could take part and many groups took advantage of the opportunity. This is a very useful tool to engage citizens and bring them closer together with decision making persons and administration. But still the concept is not known to many people, so this is still a chance to develop.</p> <p>The objectives of the project have been met fully relating to the openness and contentwise. They still suffer a wide participation but on the other hand this might not be really necessary to reach everybody: The invitation is here and the opportunity is given.</p> <p>Not all partners have become a stable factor of the partnership, some people get involved for some time, disappear and come back again at a later stage, some people have become solid partners especially the ones integrated in the strategy working group. The openness allows floating in and out which produces a very comfortable feeling of self responsibility.</p> <p>Most of the persons involved do appreciate the openness and willingness of the state department to let citizen's expertise participate in policy shaping although may be not too people really see the way how this shaping is taking place and the administration could explain more openly how decisions are made up. But the efforts are seen and recognised.</p>



Austria, case 3

LESSONS TO LEARN

The partnership is an ongoing one and probably will lead to some new ideas and projects.

The development of involving organised civil society is still in process and everyone can learn from the other participants in the process.

Consultation can have many different faces. Even if it is not named civil dialogue.

The example is not very well known in Austria, many people would not know anything about it. Maybe it would change its "cosy" atmosphere of understanding and respect, when more people enter the forum. Time will prove.

Most of the actors appreciate the initiative and will keep on using it. It is a perfect stage for presenting opinions, even contradictions, exploring different facets and get to conclusions.

The involved persons are satisfied by the outcomes as e.g. with the viewpoints, everyone has the same rights and space, so there is no need of distrust.

Maybe others will not see the big advantage of the participation dialogue as it is not a very spectacular method of consulting with civil society. But it is a very important step to reach a real civil dialogue, to offer space and opportunity to express needs, visions, opinions and alternatives of solutions to society.

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Belgium, case 1

TITLE	DEVELOPMENT OF THE PARC DE LA CRÈCHE DE MORCHAMPS (CRÈCHE DE MORCHAMPS PARK) ¹
PARTNERS	Seraing Secular Action Centre's Local Team (CAL) , district authorities, citizens
LOCATION	Molinary District, Seraing (Belgium, Liège Province)
DATE	1998
FIELD	Development and urban dynamism
OBJECTIVE	To involve residents in the development and revitalisation of their district.
DESCRIPTION	The Molinary district is considered to be disadvantaged: insalubrity, insecurity, lack of infrastructure, etc. The local branch of the Seraing Secular Action Centre decided to start a large research and action project to encourage residents to meet up and contribute together to the development of their neighbourhood and eventually to promote a real citizen dynamic. Several development initiatives had provided the basis for this movement. Amongst these, has been the development of the Crèche de Morchamp Park. This project met the need for leisure infrastructures for the district's youth. The idea was to involve young people in creating a development plan for the site to be submitted to the district authorities. The town approved this project which planned for the installation of: a multi-sport pitch, a children's playground and barbecue area. This project is part of the global rationale of involving citizens in local life. As part of the continuing project directed by young people, all residents have been invited to take part in beautifying the site (street furniture).
METHODOLOGY	In January, 1998, the CAL team launched a large survey of residents to find out their opinion of the district. Individual meetings were held. On this basis, a sociography of the district was drawn up and enabled residents' expectations in regard to their place of residence to be assessed. A second phase of action has now been implemented with different projects such as developing a youth space. The method used for this project was as follows: meet young people to encourage them to switch from complaining into being active (this pre-supposes that disagreements existing between the youth of different communities were put aside). The young people then decided to meet the various people involved in the project (the director of the crèche at the site to be developed, and the residents of the district). The residents were invited by a circular. Based on everyone's opinions, the adolescents drew up a project addressed to the district authorities. Right throughout this process, there was guidance and support available to the young people to help them in their project (drafting the project, assistance in contacting the right people, etc.).
RESULTS	The site development project was a real success. In the Molinary district, today the young people have a leisure area which meets their requirements and those of the other residents. This project has contributed in a big way to the revitalisation of the district and has reawakened the feeling of "living together."

¹ This entry has been based on the article published in the review "Devenir acteur dans la cité" ("Becoming an active participant in the city") Secular Action Centre, tool no, June, 2001.

Belgium, case 1


LESSONS TO LEARN

Workers at CAL have drawn two significant lessons from this project conducted in a district considered to be disadvantaged; two factors important in the success of such a project: first of all, citizens have to be encouraged to develop sufficient self-esteem to consider themselves as a positive addition to society; next, the awareness of a "common good" which is shared and managed with other members of society.

CONTACTS

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Belgium, case 2

TITLE	LE JARDIN PARTAGÉ DE LA BROUCHETERRE (BROUCHETERRE COMMUNAL GARDEN) 
PARTNERS	Espace Environnement, the City of Charleroi, the Quartier de Vie Broucheterre, the district committee Solidarité Broucheterre, and Funoc (Training Centre)
LOCATION	North Charleroi (Broucheterre district)
DATE	2002
FIELD	Sustainable development
OBJECTIVE	Establishing a green area, as part of a participatory project to meet objectives for the improvement of the surroundings and social cohesion.
DESCRIPTION	<p>The residents expressed their desire to see a green area established in a very run-down quarter (socially and with regard to town-planning). With the support of the Maison du Quartier and organised by the Espace Environnement, they were assisted by a training organisation. The town made a piece of land available, a pilot study was created and the development was carried out.</p> <p>The area was cleared up by residents, terraced following the plan's layout, filled in with good soil, sown and beautified with long-lasting plants; an area set aside for a vegetable plot is also included.</p> <p>The FUNOC, through its involvement in environmental career training, has committed itself to a fulfilling partnership in the Broucheterre district and swiftly joined in the project. Trainees, supervised by their instructor, took part in sessions of pruning and clearing the land, then laying borders and paving stones before helping the residents with planting.</p> <p>In parallel, activity days were organised with the children and residents of the district in order to show them all the future potential of the garden: visits of the gardens, discovery and nature trails, pocket garden creation, kitchen workshop preparing soup, graphic expression to brighten up the garden's enclosures...</p> <p>In September, 2006, a big party in the district took place to celebrate in spectacular fashion, the first plunge of the spade in the garden. These activities in particular, helped the local population to feel that the project really belonged to them.</p> <p>Meetings round off the process to organise life in the garden, complete layouts and support innovative activities, training courses, shows, and finally take part in sharing experiences with outside groups and organising visits.</p>

Belgium, case 2

METHODOLOGY	<p>To carry out the project, a partnership was created between residents, the City, the Maison du Quartier and local associations.</p> <p>Espace Environnement contributed to organising requests and initiating the pilot study approved by all partners. Further thoughts was given to the project by consulting the local population in order to set forth the activities and organise the project's guidance committee.</p>
RESULTS	<p>The land development project is now in its final stage of completion. It will then pass into a phase of self-management (by the residents of the district).</p>
ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION	<p>This project really does pursue the objectives of social cohesion. Indeed, it involves people who are generally left out of meeting places and a fortiori from decision-making processes. They have shown a genuine desire to get involved.</p> <p>In addition, this project aimed to create a multi-generational and cultural meeting place giving rise to new projects: women's groups, adolescent projects, training projects and plans to help people to return employment. Furthermore, involving trainees from the Funoc training centre has turned out to provide a gratifying learning environment in which trained people were able to put their new skills to the service of a project of public utility, whilst working in a convivial setting full of valuable exchanges. Eventually, this project was run on the basis of a wide partnership involving all actors: companies, associations, authorities and citizens.</p> <p>This project, which is a long-term one – as it is in its consolidation phase – also has the aim to educate citizens: in effect, in this disadvantaged district, it has enabled a citizens' shared learning initiative and democratic decision-making.</p>
LESSONS TO BE DRAWN	<p>This project pursues the objectives of sustainable development in urban planning. It aims to revitalise a district through a participatory project. During the course of this project, several pitfalls have been revealed from which we can draw some lessons. First of all, given the slowness of the process, it is vital to organise sessions for people to meet up and others for structuration, in order to avoid running out of steam. Finally, it would be desirable for there to be some sort of framework supportive of the participatory principle ie. for technical procedures and organisation.</p>
CONTACTS	<p>Espace Environnement asbl (Not-for-profit-association) Mme Annick Marchal M. Marc Van den Berge rue de Montigny 29 - B 6000 CHARLEROI (Belgium) +32 (0) 71 300 300 amarchal@espace-environnement.be mvdanberge@espace-environnement.be</p>

Belgium, case 3

TITLE	RAISE-PLUS
PARTNERS	Anetel
LOCATION	European Union
DATE	2007
FIELD	Sustainable Urban Development
OBJECTIVE	Contribute to developing a European public space structured around the subject of sustainable urban development.
DESCRIPTION	<p>The "Raise-plus" project follows up on the Raise project conducted in 1995 which brought together citizens of 25 European Union Member States on the subject of sustainable urban development. Discussions led to the drafting of a "Déclaration des citoyens" (Citizens' Declaration) presented to the European Parliament in December, 2005. The Raise-plus project makes yet another step forward by incorporating a local dimension into the process: the citizens' panel first made a visit to the town of Lefkara (Cyprus) to meet the residents and discuss how European projects for sustainable urban development can help to meet local challenges. A second meeting of the panel was then held in Brussels to follow up the Lefkara meeting and continue the discussion on the "City of Tomorrow."</p> <p>The Raise-plus project pursues several objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to understand European decisions, policies and research regarding urban development and make citizens aware of the real impact of the work carried out at European level; - to discuss these matters with experts, scientists and political decision-makers; - to induce citizens to draw up a report about the challenges of urban development; - to submit the recommendations for sustainable urban development.
METHODOLOGY	<p>The project was conducted in several stages.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pinpointing was problematic: identifying the subjects to tackle and creating an informative brochure for citizens who wish to get involved in the project. - Making a citizens' panel: a call for applicants was launched and more than 570 applications were received. Selection of the citizens was made by a computer programme. - Organisation of meetings: discussions between citizens were supervised by an organiser, who vouched for the deliberative method used. <p>Debate was enriched with speeches of resource persons.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A website was made available providing the outcome of the debates.

Belgium, case 3

RESULTS	<p>The Raise project has gone down in history. After its first incarnation, the Raise project, the second version, Raise-plus is being developed anew with the Move Together project which will specifically deal with matters of mobility. Methods and events will be inspired by the first two projects.</p>
ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION	<p>The discussions which took place during the project were very rewarding. The meeting of two degrees of reality, European and local levels, helps to contribute to the rapprochement of citizens and Europe because it raises awareness about the real impacts of decisions made at European level on local development and, similarly, it carries the voice of the citizens to European institutions. The value of this approach also resides in the project's longevity which gives it credibility helping to create a real dynamic.</p> <p>There are however some obstacles to overcome. Thus, the representativeness of the panel is called into question. Indeed, the citizens' panel is quasi-exclusively made up of academics, which makes one wonder as to the representation of other components of European society.</p>
LESSONS TO BE DRAWN	<p>There are two important factors to keep in mind:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First of all, the importance of the organiser's role to supervise debates and ensure that the deliberative method is respected. He plays the role of a facilitator, fostering discussions beyond linguistic and/or cultural barriers. • Then, the fact that the project is a long-term one increases its credibility.
<p>CONTACTS</p> <p>Institute of Studies for the Integration of Systems (ISIS) Carlo Sessa ,Via Flaminia 21; I-00196 Roma Telephone number: +39.06.3212655; Fax: +39.06.3213049 E-mail: csesa@isis-it.com; Website: www.isis-it.com</p>	

Bulgaria, case 1

TITLE	ORGANISATION OF MUNICIPALITIES ALONG THE VESELINA RIVER TO PREVENT THE CREATION OF A MUNICIPAL WASTE DUMP AND TO PRESENT MODERN, ECO-FRIENDLY WASTE DISPOSAL APPROACHES AND TECHNOLOGIES TO DECISION-MAKERS
PARTNERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Balkan Trust for Democracy (Independent US-based Foundation) for Initial funding and to cover start-up costs of organisation and travel - Veselina River Association, <p>Others partners :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Municipalities of Veliko Turnovo, Lyaskovets, Elena, Gorna Oryahovitsa, Zlataritsa - Village Mayors from Mindya, Kapinovo, Merdanya - Citizen Initiative Gropus from Mindya, Kapinovo, Merdanya - Regional newspaper "Borba" - Member of Parliament of Veliko Turnovo - Regional Governor, Veliko Turnovo - Office for Water – Danubian Basin - Regional Inspectorate of Environment and Water - Veliko Turnovo <p>It was an Informal, and hands-on partnership to set up the organisation and conduct its initiatives;</p>
PLACE	Bulgaria - It took place in Basin of Veselina River, Municipalities of Veliko Turnovo, Lyaskovets, Elena, Gorna Oryahovitsa, Zlataritsa. The organisation's scope area was local.
DATE	from 2005 to 2007
FIELD	Environmental impact of the planned rubbish dump, alternative approaches and how to fit this in with government policy, EU Directives and legislation. Several meetings took place – before, during and after the establishment of the VESELINA RIVER ASSOCIATION.
OBJECTIVE	<p>The Project, as funded by the BTM, was only a part of the actions. The action was to preserve nature and the income that came with it (new migrants, tourists, clean agriculture). Six major municipalities, helped by the Ministry of Environment, had decided in 2004 to resolve their municipal waste problem by setting up a dump on the left bank of the Veselina river – an estimated 320,000 tons per year. The dump yard was to be an old-fashioned, polluting site. This enraged the local population and its Mayors, who started protests and boycotts. All attempts at structured dialogue with local authorities failed, because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the six cities wanted to report to their citizens a successful resolution of the waste problem; - the Ministry wanted to quickly use EU funds from pre-accession programmes (i.e. before accession in 2007); - some local officials were corrupt and had already arranged bribes from the companies that would construct the dump yard.

Bulgaria, case 1

DESCRIPTION	
	<p>Considering that Civil Dialogue is the capacity of organised citizens, representatives of the authorities and other stakeholders to work together for the common good, Vesselina River association found its legitimacy in this kind of action.</p> <p>A huge new waste yard would pollute the Veselina river, which runs through 4 municipalities and provides water for use by the population and its livestock. Yet protests alone by the locals could not overturn the decision-making process of the Municipalities and the Ministry. The situation degenerated to open conflict, without anything constructive proposed by any side. Officials, and some of the local media, depicted the protesters as “primitive peasants standing in the way of progress”.</p> <p>Partnership objectives :</p> <p>Officials were trying to find a way out of the problem they found themselves with this massive organisation from citizens opposed the plans of the waste yard with all means available, and the bad publicity this would result. Also – to find a citizen-friendly way out of the rubbish crisis engulfing the municipalities.</p> <p>Citizens were trying to stop the pollution of their environment and the consequent loss of revenue and work.</p> <p>Someone somewhere in Bulgaria had to stand up and put an end to the rapacious attitude towards the environment of government at all levels. And protests alone were not the instrument – protesters get tired, while civil servants have all the time in the world to wait them out.</p> <p>In any case, this was a good opportunity to get everyone around the table, and into an organisation, in order to move beyond the confrontational model and end up with mobilising all available social capital to arrive at the best, and co-owned, results that would satisfy everyone. Finally, an organisation in a rural area would help lay the basis for civic behaviour for future development projects</p> <p>The format of the Civil Dialogue project was based on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Self-organisation of citizens along the Veselina to oppose the waste yard. - Meetings with Municipalities and government officials to discuss eco-friendly ways to resolve the waste issue - Articles and interviews in regional and national media - Meetings between the local Member of Parliament with the Ministry of Environment. - Mechanisms of representation settled to represent the citizens called on to take part was the creation of Veselina Association, which includes all participants in the action and is represented, under law, in the Office for Waters – Danubian Basin, having a voice in river-basin development plans.

Bulgaria, case 1

METHODS

Origins of the Civil Dialogue project :

I was offended by being called a primitive peasant by officials out to destroy one of the few preserved rivers in the entire North of Bulgaria. After a media campaign to explain the issues, I mobilised my NGO, the Centre for Social Practices – Sofia, to find funding in order to set up a local organisation to protect the environment and draft alternative plans for waste processing. We found some funding and started setting up the organisation, travelling to meet all sides of the issue, hiring environmental experts, scientists and researching international experience.

We made sure that the Ministry and the Municipalities were aware that we had mobilised not only experts, locals and media, but also – the village Mayors and public opinion in one of the six Municipalities, which voted to not take part in the waste yard scheme. We also mobilised various environmental organisations, which warned the municipalities that this kind of behaviour would be made known in the European Commission and a EC-related inspection could be arranged.

Ultimately, we set up the Vesselina Association to include representatives of all stakeholders, including the six Municipalities involved, the local media, environmental experts from the capital Sofia and representatives from the regional departments of the Ministry of Environment. The Association then got in touch with local Members of Parliament, who helped arrange two meetings with the Minister of the Environment.

In the meantime, environmental and waste management experts provided an alternative to the waste yard – a modern project, in line with EU standards, far away from any of the local rivers or habitats. After a series of negotiations, involving all Mayors, Municipal Councils and the Ministry of Environment, this alternative project was approved and the Ministry initiated an environmental risk assessment for the new project.

Hereafter, the Association will be moving from defensive measures to measures for the environment conservation and development the area of the Vesselina river.

The practical organisational arrangements of the dialogue were :

- Initial self-organisation of citizens to protest.
- Meetings between citizen groups and Municipalities
- Meetings between citizen groups and government officials.
- Media exposure.
- Setting up of the organisation: 3 meetings in total.
- Meetings between the organisation (Veselina Association) and the Ministry of Environment (2 meetings in total).

The tools chosen for the exchanges, for the dialogue itself were discussion, expert reports and media.

Participants signed up to an agreement to stop the waste yard scheme and formulated a new approach – new site and new technology.

Organisation became part of Office for Waters – Danubian Basin and integrated its recommendations into the Danubian Basin Development Plan.

Those tools were defined during the work with all the participants.

Bulgaria, case 1

RESULTS	<p>In this action, results were that all key opinions were taken into account.</p> <p>The objectives of the partnership have been reached almost fully. Still, there were some delays on the Ministry of Environment side to immediately start implementing most modern waste disposal approaches.</p>
ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION	<p>I became involved when I met citizen initiative groups determined to oppose the waste yard with violence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About 35 individuals in total were involved into the project • The public concerned by the project was, including Municipal Councils and Citizen Initiative Groups, about 200. • The kinds of actors involved into the project were Public bodies and civic groups, media and experts on rubbish. • The responsibilities were organised by general meeting of all interested parties elected representatives to set up an organisation; then the organisation elected representatives. • Member of Parliament, Ministry of Environment appeared half-way through while implementing the action .
LESSONS TO BE DRAWN	<p>The civil dialogue process proved to be successful because it avoided open conflict, achieved dialogue and then produced a result that all concerned identify with. It also set the basis for future dialogue for both evading conflicts and attaining new results – such as implementing major conservation projects.</p> <p>The partnership keep on working after the action itself. Municipalities and Ministry work on implementing the new project – new environmentally safe site with modern technology. Media follows the developments of the project. Citizen Initiative Groups continue to exist and monitor the process.</p> <p>Positive points derived directly from this experience because instead of violent opposition, environment destruction and poverty, a common agreement on constructive solution was found.</p> <p>It is always difficult to get the government to agree with progressive ideas, unless you have powerful allies (media, members of parliament) outside the civic groups.</p> <p>The negative points of this action were that government tried to avoid citizen demands for too long and one civil servant asked for a bribe in order to stop the waste yard.</p> <p>The local actors have appreciated the initiative and they would be ready to repeat it because they have seen a real result that impacts on their daily lives.</p>
CONTACTS	<p>Name of the contact person: Evgenii Dainov - Chairman. Phone number: ...+ 359 885 740 951 E-mail: edainov@csp-sofia.org Address: Mindya village, Veliko Turnovo Municipality Country: Bulgaria Website : www.csp-sofia.org</p>

Bulgaria, case 2

TITLE	OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVING THE LIVING SPACE AND ECOLOGY OF NORTH DISTRICT OF PLOVDIV CITY
PARTNERS	<p>The strategic partner of the National Alliance for volunteer action (NAVA) in the initiating of the Forum was the local authority - district administration of North District.</p> <p>During the entire project cycle the administration was providing expert assistance and technical support of the project team. In the Forum process also participated non-governmental organisations, working in the field of the District-Pensioners' Union, Sports Clubs, School management, Community centers, Union of disabled people and Union of deaf and blinded people, etc.</p>
PLACE	Bulgaria - North District, Plovdiv City,
DATE	The project started on January 2004 and finished on December 2004.
FIELD	<p>The aim of the project was the realisation of a wide public discussion / Forum/ in Plovdiv, Bulgaria with the participation of citizens, municipal administration, NGO's, different youth groups, business sector, regional institutions, representatives of education and health services and others. Opportunities for improving the living space and ecology of North District of Plovdiv City.</p>
OBJECTIVE	Local participation process for the improvement of living space and ecology
DESCRIPTION	<p>Approximately 80,200 people live in the Northern District territory. They have minimal opportunities to participate in any decisional process, even at a local level. There is also no clear way to create a dialogue between citizens and the authorities. The latter have shown no will to consult with the people via referendums or to discuss any of the important problems which the community might be facing. This is why this project was crucial. It provided the citizens with a means, a forum, to get actively involved in the decisional process at the local level. Preliminary research launched by the Alliance Nationale pour l'Action Volontaire (NAVA) and the Northern District administration has shown that specific issues regarding the living environment and ecology are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Citizens living in the Northern District territory need the spaces in between the apartment building blocks to be landscaped. Indeed, the whole district is due for aesthetic improvement. - Schools and universities need play areas and sporting grounds so that the children have a place to go in their free time. - Business people explained that the area surrounding businesses and luxury hotels does not currently offer the appropriate conditions associated with 4 or 5 star hotel chains. - Members of the Tsigane community from 2 large parts of the district asked that their territory be developed so as to create educational programs about ecology for their children - The Union of Handicapped People (of the Physically Challenged) and the Union of the Hearing Impaired and Visually Challenged (Deaf & Blind) declared that an improvement of the living space is necessary to accommodate for handicapped people. Most of the buildings and public institutions are not adapted for people of particular needs.

Bulgaria, case 2

<p>DESCRIPTION</p>	<p>All of the important issues are submitted during discussion forums. Certain decisions are retained and elaborated upon in projects. In the Northern district territory, a considerable number of NGOs and civil groups have expressed the need to establish a daily dialogue and to collaborate with the administration, as well as to take part in the discussions on the Forum where anyone can find partners to carry out his/her ideas.</p>
<p>METHODS</p>	<p>In the framework of a whole calendar year were organized 7 Forums/ sessions/ with the participation of 70-90 citizens and total duration of 5-6 hours. All Forum-sessions were opened for the interested sides and a lot of medias' representatives/ electronic and printed/ took participation on them. A special Bulletin was published after each of the sessions showing the effect on the discussions and joint decisions of the citizens and authorities.</p> <p>The Bulletin was spread over the whole community.</p> <p>Each session was focused on different aspects related to the basic theme "Opportunities for improving the living space and ecology of North District of Plovdiv City" and was leaded by moderator and entered in record. At the end of the session all participants had the responsibility contribute to the discussion results as:</p> <p>They formulated recommendations to the authorities and other significant institutions explaining what kind of changes and improvements had to be made on the territory of the District.</p> <p>They initiated project proposals, related to the improvement of the living space of the District and created work groups, that had to elaborate the ideas.</p> <p>The Forum-process included totally 6 sessions and one preliminary meeting. The duration of the entire process was 10 months.</p> <p>Participants, 70-90 persons, worked in 7 work groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal administration • Non-governmental organizations working on the territory of the District • Small and middle businesses • Neighbourhood communities • Young people and youth groups • Public health services and social activities • Education <p>At the time of the different Forum-meetings, all participants were discussing current problems, concerning the living space and ecology of the District and suggestions for their improvement. Each session ended with Recommendations to the institutions and Project Drafts.</p>

Bulgaria, case 2

<p>METHODS</p>	<p>Between the Forum sessions, work groups elaborated the project drafts and organised meetings between different institutions and municipal administration aiming to inspect the citizens' recommendations that were given during the sessions. There was a specially created work group, responsible for the structuring of the news Bulletin.</p> <p>At the time of the last Forum-session participants discussed all project ideas offered during the discussions and, as a result of them, they chose eight to be realised in the next 12 months.</p> <p>After the discussions' implementation, started the period of practical realisation of these 10 citizens' projects, accomplished thanks to the financial support of the Swiss Agency for development and cooperation, District administration and civil regional organisations. During the realization of the projects, all civil teams were actively assisted and supervised by experts and consultants working for the National Alliance for volunteer action/NAVA/. Some of the finished projects, offered during the Forum , are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overhaul of 8 sports grounds, located between the block of flats' spaces. The mentioned grounds have been entirely maintained by the citizens up to this moment. • Building the first ground designed for the education of small children to safe streets movement in Bulgaria. The ground's elements have real rate. • Repair and equipment of 2 sports grounds in the District's schools, where children from different ethnic groups have been educated. • Building a Zone for relaxation along the bank of Maritza river, intended for all generations. • Repair of the pavements in the District and making them accessible for the people with disabilities • Creation and publication of District newspaper, popularising the civil participation in the development of the region. The edition is distributed monthly.
<p>RESULTS</p>	<p>The achieved results totally exceeded the expected ones in the pre-project phase.</p> <p>The basic results that were achieved, are the following :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exceptional interest of the citizens for participation in long-term process of discussing and decision-making of important local problems. • Addressed 23 recommendations to concrete institutions and authorities, having an attitude to the discussed themes and problems during the moderated Forum-sessions. • Initiated and realised 8 partners' projects. • Registration of a new civil Association - Union of house manager and passport registrar • Increased interest of the state and municipal administration at the territory of Plovdiv to the citizens' problems and the ways for implementing a good dialogue between all sides. • Increased information to citizens for the work of local authorities and difficulties that they meet in the process of appropriate decisions-making. • Active dialogue between representatives of different social groups on important citizens' issues.

Bulgaria, case 2

<p>RESULTS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved skills and knowledge of the Forum-participants to develop projects and initiatives by themselves. • Published 7 copies of the Forum-Bulletin of North District, Plovdiv. They were spread over all Forum-participants as well as over the newspapers' pavilions at the territory of the District. • Wide publicity and promotion of the civil participation as a good practice. A lot of medias' representatives participated in the Forum-sessions and all of the sessions were popularized in the news and newspapers' publications. • Having an affect of the Forum by 12 Swiss journalists who have participated in 5th session. Publications in Swiss newspapers for the successful civil participation in the Forum-process in North District, Plovdiv. • Created sustainable partnerships between all Forum-participants.
<p>ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION</p>	<p>The project realization contributed for :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of dialogue and partnership between the Municipality of Plovdiv, citizens, NGO's, institutions and business sector in the District management and decision making of the most significant problems of the community. • Encouraging the citizens' participation in the management of North District. • Supporting the work of local authorities and administration through implementation of the decisions that were made on the Forum-sessions • Popularisation of the Forum-approach among the citizens through the published Bulletins of the Forums – 7 in total. • Promoting the open and transparent dialogue between all interested citizens and local authorities. A lot of medias' representatives participated in the Forum-sessions, including Maritza newspaper, TV EUROCOM-Plovdiv, Plovdiv Public Television and others. All of the sessions were popularised in the news and newspapers' publications. • Building strong partnerships between civil society groups and organizations as well as between citizens and public institutions in the decision making of local problems. • Acquiring an experience in the initiating and developing projects of citizens by themselves.

Bulgaria, case 2

LESSONS TO BE DRAWN

The following project could be regarded as a good practice because:

- The Forum-approach is a well-structured process, with clear steps, principles and roles so it may be executed in different communities and themes.
- The Forum-process is public and transparent, so it can be appropriated by a great number of citizens, who have participated in it directly or have been informed by the medias.
- The created products during the project seem to be long-lasting and sustainable.
- The realised project's products are used by the citizens every day. As a result of the recommendations, addressed by the participants to different institutions and authorities, significant enduring changes in the municipal politics have occurred.
- After the project's completion and assimilation of the Forum-approach, the last could be carried out by other civil organisations and groups in the discussion and decision-making of new local problems. When the project ended, district administration and citizens initiated moderated debates by themselves and took joint decisions on different important issues.

CONTACTS

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Bulgaria, case 3

TITLE	RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS OF CHILDREN WITH MENTAL DISABILITIES
PARTNERS	Bulgarian Helsinki Committee (Human Rights Non-governmental organisation) Bulgarian NGOs: For Our Children, Institute for social activities and practices, International Social Services Department in Bulgaria, Bulgarian Association of People with Intellectual Disabilities, Caritas, State Social Assistance Agency, UNICEF, English ARK Foundation.
PLACE	Bulgaria – national area
DATE	1999 – 2007
FIELD	Discrimination and violations of human rights of children with mental disabilities who live in institutions (social care homes) in Bulgaria.
OBJECTIVE	Social (re)integration of children with mental disabilities through their placement in foster families, public policy transformation in the area.
DESCRIPTION	<p>For the last 8 years, we have been trying different mechanisms to raise awareness about the problem of the abandonment of children. We have also been trying to find effective political and practical solutions. No government since 1999 has treated the issue with competency or consistency. We continued visiting all homes in the country and reporting to national and international relevant bodies with little effect.</p> <p>We believe children who live in institutions become gradually more and more disabled because of institutionalisation.</p> <p>We believe and proved Bulgaria has huge problem with diagnosing disabilities because of low competency of physicians and lack of mechanisms for review of diagnosis.</p> <p>In Bulgaria, the government pays more for an institutionalised child than for one living in his/her family This is unacceptable because of the long-term segregation of many children and adults. They can and should be involved so as to contribute to our society as citizens with equal rights.</p> <p>Approximately 1200 children and young adults reside in 26 homes in remote areas where they have no access to education, healthcare, social contacts.</p> <p>Integration is not seen as a real perspective in their lives.</p> <p>Once they are placed in an institution they die in it or are moved to another one. We lobbied for their real deinstitutionalisation by adoptions, foster care, placement in family-type group homes in the big district centres so that their integration in society would be ensured.</p>
METHODS	First we documented the situation in all social care homes for children with mental disabilities in 2000 and 2001. In 2002 we published a report containing detailed reports for each institution with analysis of the system as a whole. We presented it on a round table and distributed the report to relevant ministries, foreign embassies in Bulgaria, children care NGOs, universities, media. As a result the newly established State Agency for Child Protection had a database to rely on. The report is available in English on www.bghelsinki.org . Still, this was not enough to raise broad public awareness.

Bulgaria, case 3

METHODS

In 2002 we organised a campaign with Amnesty International to lobby internationally for the rights of children and adults with mental disabilities who live in Bulgarian institutions. The government again denied the problem. In 2003 the Ministry of Social Policy which supervised all social care homes adopted a new law to decentralise them and continued to fund them but the management was left to local municipalities that were not prepared.

In 2004 we published a new report with several other NGOs on the situation of children to report and lobby before the European Commission which in 2002 started insisting that Bulgarian government improve the conditions in children institutions and start deinstitutionalisation with proper measures for establishment of alternatives like foster families, adoptions, small family-type group homes. The government received several million euros from the European Commission to “improve conditions” and renovate the remote institutions. But without changing the model of care, facilitating the integration, supporting the access to education and socialisation of the children. Day-care centres, group homes, centres for rehabilitation were established with part of the EU funding but with no needs assessment of the potential clients, no proper selection and training of the staff, no new philosophy of independent living. So the alternatives do not serve the patient of the big institutions but serve partially the local community that needs such services as well. The children in institutions were not deinstitutionalised and continued suffering ill-treatment, degrading attitude, inhuman living conditions.

In 2006 we managed to support a film to be shot about one such home (in the village of Mogilino where 75 children lived) for the period of 9 months. The film was called “Bulgaria’s Abandoned Children” and was shown on BBC4 on 13th of September 2007. It was shown also on BB2 on 18th of November. It shows that improvement of material conditions in these homes was not enough and that the children are treated in completely unacceptable inhuman and degrading manner with no perspective for their future.

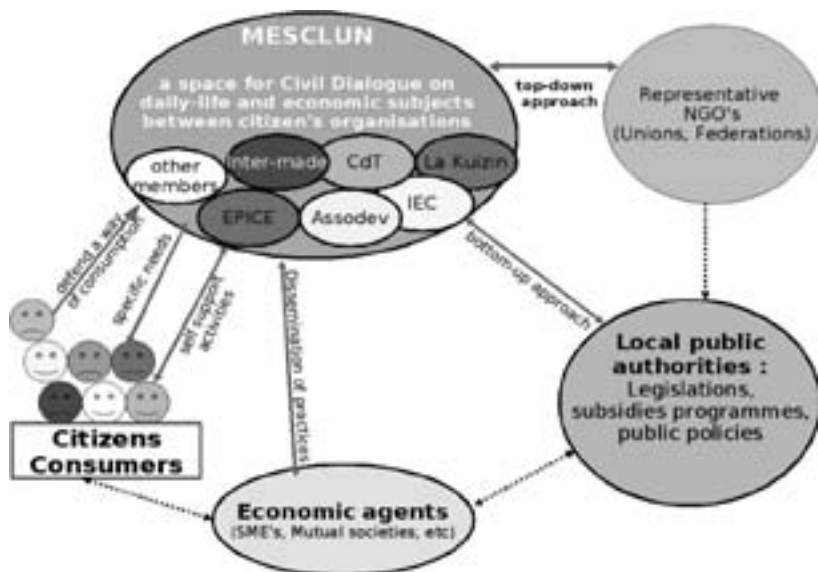
The UK reaction to the film was very strong but the Bulgarian government was of the opinion that with so severely disabled children any European country would have achieved the same results. For the last 4 years each time after a media scandal the Bulgarian government closed one home and moved the children to others thus not allowing a single child to be deinstitutionalised. After 40 days of discussions in September and October 2007 with local NGOs, media and ministries none of which was prepared to think about solution of the problem. We thus formed a coalition of NGOs funded by UNICEF that reached an agreement with the State for real deinstitutionalisation of the 75 children in the home in Mogilino. They started working on such case for the first time and this is a big challenge for them. This used to be an issue they were not concerned about in the past. We also supported a civil protest of the Bulgarian Mothers Movement against the Ministry of social policy insisting on consistent and long-term state policy against abandonment and for provision of quality care for all children with disabilities in the country but especially for children in institutions. Thus a civil organisation was campaigning for the first time in the public space defending not its own interests but those of most vulnerable members of society.

Bulgaria, case 3

RESULTS	<p>We achieved a strong coalition of NGOs who work with the State for real deinstitutionalisation of children with mental disabilities. We achieved quality assessments of the needs of the children and quality care for them for the period of 6 months before the closure of the home, quality assessment of the services that can work with the children after the closure of the home and we used the opportunity to raise awareness also about the rest 25 homes in the country that need the same activities to happen. We broke the inertia of the government to move children from institution to institution without changing the model of care and perspectives for their future. All these activities are now still going on.</p> <p>We all think this would be a good example on how this should be done for all other institutions in the country.</p>
ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION	<p>It is precedent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the first time when NGOs managed to unite around child-centred approach solving a complicated problem with a 70 year-long history and inertia requiring change of social attitudes • the first time when the Ministry of social policy changed its plan and accepted NGOs as experts and leaders of the process • It would be the first time when State and NGOs unite to give a real perspective for these children respecting their dignity, right to life, healthcare, education, full integration in society.
LESSONS TO BE DRAWN	<p>Constant communication with relevant participants of non-governmental organisations, executive power representatives, members of the parliament aimed at comprehensive understanding and adequate action based on same principles of democracy, representation of all parties, proportionate share of the participation, equality in arms.</p>
CONTACTS <p>Name of the contact person: Slavka Kukova. Phone number: +359899000998, +35929434876 E-mail: slavka.kukova@gmail.com Address: 7 Varbitsa street, Sofia 1504, Country: Bulgaria www.bghelsinki.org http://mogilino.wordpress.com</p>	

France, case 1

TITLE	MESCLUN - COLLECTIF D'ENTREPRENEURS D'ECONOMIE SOCIALE ET SOLIDAIRE
PARTNERS	<p>Initiatives Europe Conseil, Citoyens de la terre, Gay Provence, La Kuizin, Epice, les K-barrés, Inter-Made, Emouvance, GRUIK, Caravane Kafila, Assodev, Envisages, Fabrik Filmic</p> <p>Conseil Régional Provence-Alpes-Côtes d'Azur (Regional Council for Provence-Alpes-Côtes d'Azur), Conseil général des Bouches du Rhône (Bouches du Rhône General Council), Agence Provençale pour l'Economie Alternative et Solidaire (Provençale Agency for Alternative and Solidarity Economy).</p>
PLACE	MARSEILLE
DATE	Since 2005
FIELD	Promotion and support of Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) entrepreneurs
OBJECTIVE	<p>The Mesclun association brings together a group of 13 not-for-profit associations to defend strong social aims relying on the development of a responsible and sustainable economic project.</p> <p>Brought into existence by the mobilisation of volunteers from civil society, each of the member structures protects the social aims of the association on a daily basis. Employees and volunteers implement these social aims.</p> <p>As a local group, Mesclun encourages citizen mobilisation in each of its member structures based on a self-managed and participatory basis.</p> <p>The values held by Social and Solidarity Economy are hereby put into practice.</p> <p>The Mesclun association aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - develop a mutual approach of solidarity and assistance between members to improve the circumstances under which their projects for social and solidarity economy are implemented. - promote collective and solidarity initiatives in the cultural, social and environmental domains, in the fields of tourism, local development, social inclusion and international solidarity. <p>The association studies, experiments and ensures management of all means which enable it to achieve its objectives, in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the exchange and sharing of skills, know-how, resources and means; - the training of promoters and those benefiting from local projects; - the creation and management of a solidarity fund intended for its members.



France, case n°1

<p>DESCRIPTION</p>	<p>The members of the Mesclun group are emerging structures (0 to 5 years old), presently in a professionalisation phase (0 to 4 employees) and looking to attain economic viability (diversity of resources). These structures have decided to put an end to the isolation they would have experienced, by associating themselves with other structures of the same entrepreneurial nature and using the same practices : the development of an alternative way to proceed by the citizens and for the citizens, the protection of social aims for communities, citizens, companies and media, the not-for-profit status, democratic governance and territorial anchoring.</p> <p>The Mesclun group's commitment to civil dialogue can be placed at several levels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - at the citizen level: goods, services, events and action offered by Mesclun and its members are the results of constant dialogue (co-construction of supply) with the users, the citizens. - at the authorities level: Mesclun highlights and promotes social aims supported by each of the members in the groups in the context of requests for financial contribution (subsidies) - at the economic level: by proposing a platform of economic alternatives
<p>METHODOLOGY</p>	<p>Dialogue between members of MESCLUN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The decision-making body of the Group brings together one employee and one volunteer from each of the member structures of the group which has one vote during board meetings - Discussions and debates will relate to internal strengthening of responsible practices (governance, territorial anchoring) <p>Dialogue with authorities and their representatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Designation of a representative to take part in the various plans for institutional dialogue (ex.: permanent SSE meetings, public consultations) - Participation in local economic development policies by responding to public tenders <p>Dialogue with other socio-economic actors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Designation of a representative to take part in various dialogue plans organised by socio-economic actors (ex.: consular chamber, federations, etc.) - Implementation of training programmes and provision of services to enable companies and associations to adopt socially responsible and economically sustainable practices (spin-offs).
<p>RESULTS</p>	<p>Members of Mesclun are represented in a more effective way in the communities and amongst socio-economic actors.</p> <p>Economic solidarity organised by the group enables jobs to last longer and increase wealth creation at a local level, which is the pledged commitment of our elected representatives.</p> <p>Co-construction with users of the supply of goods and services adapted to the specific needs as opposed to the mass goods and services on offer in the market economy.</p>

France, case n°1

<p>ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION</p>	<p>The dialogue arranged between the members of Mesclun enables common needs to be met for the development of citizens' economic projects: representativeness, spin-offs, pooling of resources, territorial anchoring and professionalisation. Bringing together entrepreneurs in a group enables these needs to be met and supported by building communication strength with local political and socio-economic actors. However, the MESCLUN organisation is in a state of constant development. This group activity takes time for each of the members, and volunteer investment is sometimes sporadic.</p>
<p>LESSONS TO BE DRAWN</p>	<p>To be united means to be strong – this is the principal lesson to be drawn. It would seem that attaining a critical size and becoming an economic actor more easily enables civil dialogue originating from the citizen, addressing local political and economic organisations.</p> <p>To conclude, economy, employment and the response of civil society to its needs are the main assets to this dialogue which the group wishes to put in place on a permanent basis at a local level.</p> <p>It is now for the group to extend its operation whilst remaining open to local initiatives and take part in spreading the group's practices to other emerging groups.</p>
<p>CONTACTS</p> <p>MESCLUN Julia Benzrihem and Emilie Ziad 14 rue Berlioz, 13006 Marseille FRANCE +33 (0)6 30 65 55 13 mesclun@no-log.org www.mesclun.org</p>	

France, case 2

TITLE	ALLIANCE PROVENCE - RÉSEAU RÉGIONAL DES AMAP (AMAP REGIONAL NETWORK - ASSOCIATIONS FOR THE PRESERVATION OF SMALL FARM AGRICULTURE)
PARTNERS	<p>Organisations:</p> <p>Bio de Provence (network of regional organic farmers), Confédération Paysanne (agricultural union), APEAS (Provençale Agency for an Alternative and Solidarity Economy), Terres Fertiles, ADEAR, consumer groups which operate within the AMAPs.</p> <p>Financers:</p> <p>Department for Ecology, and Sustainable Development; Conseil Régional PACA (PACA Regional Council); Conseil Général des Bouches du Rhône et du Var (General Council of the Bouches du Rhône and Var); Communauté d'agglomération du Pays d'Aubagne Combined Aubagne District Council.</p>
PLACE	PACA Région
DATE	Since 2001
FIELD	Support and development of local small farm agriculture
OBJECTIVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To maintain small farm agriculture in the region - To develop economic solidarity - To eat healthily
DESCRIPTION	<p>Faced with the increasing disappearance of farms and with the common aim to maintain and develop ecologically responsible small-scale farming, farmers and consumers have decided to work together and set up a contractual relation by creating AMAPs in the PACA region.</p> <p>"An AMAP is an association for the preservation of small farm agriculture. A real partnership between producers and consumers based on an fair, solidarity, transparent and friendly network."</p> <p>For the development of AMAPs, ALLIANCE PROVENCE, an association created under the terms of the law of 1901 acts on two levels:</p> <p>> Public Information</p> <p>Alliance Provence aims to promote information and intervention in the public debate about the consequences of agricultural policies and practices on sustaining the farming community, on consumption and on the environment. Problems associated with commerce are also addressed while alternatives for reciprocal trade in agricultural and related products, in France, Europe and worldwide are debated.</p> <p>> Development and Network Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing a network of local consumers and producers - Support for AMAP originators - Technical support for producers - Training in organic farming - Implementation of participatory evaluation of AMAPs

France, case 2

METHODOLOGY	<p>The importance of civil dialogue in the ALLIANCE PROVENCE project is demonstrated in the partnership between the project's stakeholders right down the AMAP "network," and also in the association's willingness to mobilise institutions to tackle the problems of local farming.</p> <p>The partnership between the parties involved in the project is taking shape particularly as a result of sharing risks between the producer and the consumers. With the prepayment solution and discussions on farm management, consumer become active in the production process, and the producer ceases to be isolated.</p> <p>Mobilising institutions to tackle the problems of local farming is a real challenge in the PACA region. As a farming area which has become a tourist spot, the region is undergoing such a land squeeze that young farmers are no longer able to find land to set up farms, whilst farmers who are giving up farming prefer to sell their land for building projects. Questioning the authorities is to put the problem to the political level of land management, food production independence and economic stability of the region.</p>
RESULTS	<p>To date, a hundred AMAPs operate in the PACA region. They help to keep more than 160 local farms running.</p> <p>The authorities are getting organised and are giving their direct financial support to AMAPs, for example by financing organic certification for farms.</p>
ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION	<p>Reciprocity is one of the factors in the success of the ALLIANCE PROVENCE project. This is the real meaning of the term partnership between consumers and farmers.</p> <p>In exchange for good products and transparency about production methods, consumers commit themselves to supporting the farmer on a long-term basis, and vice versa for the farmer.</p> <p>This is also a system where the citizen becomes a participant again through consumption actions.</p>
LESSONS TO BE DRAWN	<p>A citizens' initiative combining consumers and farmers can solve a general problem and create a dynamic force for new patterns in consumption.</p> <p>However, developing the concept cannot be carried out without community support, particularly in response to the economic land squeeze.</p>
CONTACTS	<p>ALLIANCE PROVENCE réseau régional des AMAP AMAP Regional Network Gaëtan Vallée Telephone number: 04 94 98 80 00 E-mail: allianceprovence@wanadoo.fr Address: 17 rue Daniel Melchior, 83000 Toulon Country: FRANCE Website: www.allianceprovence.org</p>

France, case n°3

TITLE	LA KUIZIN
PARTNERS	<p>La KUIZIN, an association formed under the terms of the law of 1901 and comprising a governing board of 12 people, 20 active members, 3 employees, 1000 subscribing members (residents of the district, supporters and partners).</p> <p>Various associated parties are involved in the project: residents, in particular families, schools in the district, social organisations (Maison du Quartier, Red Cross, various socio-cultural organisations).</p> <p>The value of the project and the exchanges brought about by the association have enabled there to be a veritable “public discussion space” which has led several institutions: Politique de la Ville, Conseil Général and Conseil Régional (General and Regional Councils) to give their support to the project.</p>
PLACE	Quartier de la Belle de Mai - in Marseilles - France
DATE	Since 2004
FIELD	Social, socio-cultural action.
OBJECTIVE	To offer a tool for interdependent liaison based on shared activities (cooking, gardening, artistic activities, friendly get-togethers, etc.) to encourage cultural interchange, well-being, group and mutual assistance projects.
DESCRIPTION	<p>La KUIZIN has implemented various initiatives:</p> <p>> WORKSHOPS</p> <p>The programme “My Street, My Planet” proposes an environmental approach (consumption, waste disposal, ecology) based on daily experiences and the location (identity, way of living, health, attitude to the street, the town, other people, citizenship) to encompass a global vision of our planet. These workshops are intended for children and families in a curricular or extra-curricular context and are put forward as friendly and participatory events.</p> <p>- THE CORNER</p> <p>A piece of fallow land in the heart of a district devoid of any communal areas was redeveloped. A group grew around the project with a participatory consultation approach which involved the residents, partner associations and the district City council. In definite terms, this project is viewed as an opportunity to rediscover one another, one’s environment, one’s relationship to one’s neighbours and residents beyond the limits of generation and culture.</p> <p>- THE SHARED CANTEEN</p> <p>The canteen is a place to share, equipped with an open kitchen where workshops, activities and gatherings take place, as well as daily cooking at lunch-time for members.</p>

France, case n°3

METHODOLOGY	<p>Active Education: activities are conceived from an active educational outlook where participants are actors from conception to execution. It is about making people want to work together using "a dynamic based on 'working together' and the involvement of everyone in the communal and/or public purpose."</p> <p>Conviviality:</p> <p>Setting up friendly meeting places open to everyone enables bonds to be created between residents and existing social structures.</p> <p>Affordable rates</p> <p>To encourage a varied public, the association asks for a contribution that is within the means of everyone, based on the principle of making people responsible for themselves by putting forward indicative prices.</p> <p>Group Therapy</p> <p>Via discussions on various themes, living environment, health, consumption, etc., this is about supporting and guiding the participatory measures for the district and the street with a view to helping residents reclaim their district.</p> <p>Suggestion Box</p> <p>Boxes are put in various locations, at associations and in shops in the district so that anybody who so wishes can share opinions and ideas.</p>
RESULTS	<p>A real participatory group dynamic exists due to specific methods which have been set up to foster discussion and participation amongst the parties involved.</p> <p>The territorial and global anchoring of the project has been found to work and meets the challenge of mobilising residents in their district to tackle global problems linked with responsible consumption, the environment, health, etc.</p> <p>The networking of social structures in the district has assisted the group project by connecting actors and citizens.</p>
ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION	<p>Two factors have made the project succeed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - method and tools: members of the association have managed to use their experience in the field of social and socio-cultural action to make methods and specific organisational tools work for the project. Active education and territorial anchoring, for example. - an approach: Cohesion of the group/ collective, conviviality, availability of members and networking, have all been strong points in the shared project.
LESSONS TO BE DRAWN	<p>La KUIZIN established itself as a partner of social and institutional players. The networking which it has started demonstrates that the work of a citizens' association in the heart of a run-down district can round off, or even reinforce the efforts of social and institutional players. In effect, La KUIZIN enables public services to establish links between residents and existing social structures.</p>
CONTACTS	<p>LA KUIZIN Anne GOHRING and Juliette OHEIX 35/36 rue Bernard, 13003 Marseille, FRANCE TELEPHONE NUMBER: + 33 (0)4 91 05 97 03 – E-MAIL: kuizin@no-log.org WEBSITE: www.lakuizin.org</p>

Hungary, case 1



TITLE	THE DISCONTINUATION OF RAILWAY BRANCH LINES
PARTNERS	<p>Clear Air Action Group (CAAG) - CAAG is an alliance.</p> <p>Clear Air Action Group wants to deal with issues which are supported by local residents. If the issue does not attract residents' support then the Group does not stand behind it. It takes a stance or gives declarations but this organisation does not, for example, organise demonstrations.</p> <p>Partners of CAAG are: local social, education, health and tourism NGOs.</p> <p>The Hungarian Transport Club, the Reflex Environment Protection Association and other national organisations.</p>
PLACE	The organisation's scope area is national.
DATE	The project has been running since Summer 2006.
FIELD	Since it was established in 1988, one of the goals of the organisation has been campaigning for the development of public transport and rail delivery. This work is very important as well for the organisation therefore it has been working on this continuously over the past years. The other task of the organisation is raising awareness and informing the public about serious issues such as the discontinuation of railway lines in different parts of the country therefore the organisation is informing the local residents about the effects.
OBJECTIVE	Public transportation (rail) preservation in small towns
DESCRIPTION	<p>In July 2006, the Ministry of Economy and Transport announced that they would abolish 28 rail branch lines.</p> <p>Clear Air Action Group was asked by local NGOs to initiate public consultations, as these local NGOs would be affected by the discontinuation of rail branch lines.</p>
METHODOLOGY	<p>CAAG asked residents to sign a petition,</p> <p>Residents and local NGOs protested against shutting down the railway lines.</p> <p>Conferences were organised regarding this issue.</p> <p>We travelled on the rail network with rucksacks and appropriate media coverage. We counted the number of passengers on our own initiative and took photos.</p> <p>The Hungarian Transport Club, CAAG partner organisation, organised residential meetings in those towns which would be affected by the abolition.</p> <p>On 6th December 2006, 6 months after announcing the abolition of the 28 railway lines, a "Public Consultation" meeting was held at which the Ministry of Economy and Transport stated that 14 railway lines would be shut down.</p> <p>CAAG produced 1500 copies of a map called "Railway Friends" for the "Travelling 2007" exhibition. CAAG marked the 14 railway lines which would not exist any more in the future.</p> <p>On 25th October 2007 there was a public consultation at the Ministry of Economy and Transport. Following this, the Ministry put the plan for the railway lines on their website. On this website NGOs were able to express their opinions and add their thoughts about the plan. However this only lasted until 7th November 2007.</p> <p>During this process, constant media contact were held.</p>

Hungary, case 1



RESULTS	<p>The success of the project is that 3 railway lines will stay.</p> <p>There will be railway lines which will be run by the affected small regions, so it means that they can run in the future.</p> <p>Local NGOs experienced influencing their local area by expressing their own opinion about the changes.</p> <p>Since the Schengen Treaty, towns located at the borders have had the chance to improve railway connections with towns in other countries bordering Hungary.</p>
ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION	<p>Local people have to be active in their towns and express their views on local issues.</p> <p>In Hungary it is common that such issues are politicised, however in this instance the demonstrations were not organised by any political parties. This cooperation was above any political involvement.</p> <p>When CAAG organised a forum, politicians were invited to these meetings but they were not speakers. They had the right to express their opinions and views in the meetings.</p>
LESSONS TO BE DRAWN	<p>Generally, NGOs work well together, not only Environment organisations. These organisations come from diverse fields (social, education, tourism, health). The goal was the same for every organisation.</p>
CONTACTS Name of the contact person: Ágnes Hajtman Phone number: +36 1 411-0509 E-mail: levego@levego.hu Address: 1075 Budapest, Károly krt 3/a, Hungary Country: Hungary website: www.levego.hu	

Hungary, case 2



TITLE	STUDENTS FEES AT UNIVERSITIES
PARTNERS	<p>The National Union of Students in Hungary (HÖÖK) - HÖÖK is a public body.</p> <p>The Union is the public peak body of the self-representation bodies of the students at colleges and universities.</p> <p>HÖÖK's partners were trade unions and national alliances. HÖÖK has been working with their partners for many years.</p>
PLACE	The organisation's scope area is national.
DATE	The project has been running since May 2006.
FIELD	HÖÖK would like to reach a good standard of teaching in universities
OBJECTIVE	Negotiation of the proposed introduction of student fees
DESCRIPTION	<p>The issue is important because introducing of student fees would have a negative impact on students' and families' lives.</p> <p>HÖÖK is the only organisation that supports and advocates the rights of university students in Hungary.</p> <p>In this case, the initiator of the dialogue was the Ministry of Education and Culture.</p>
METHODOLOGY	<p>There were meetings between HÖÖK and professionals of the Ministry of Education and Culture. The participants attended round table discussions. The meetings did not take place on regular basis.</p> <p>The media was highly involved, both parties issues press releases, and many articles was written about the topic.</p>
RESULTS	The first result is that at least the Ministry of Education and Culture wanted to give the opportunity to discuss the issue. The goal is to achieve high quality teaching at universities in Hungary. HÖÖK's proposal that 15% of the best and most hard working students should not pay fees has been accepted by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The best result would be to have no university fees at all.
ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION	There have been lots of demonstrations in Budapest and other university cities. Current students are united against these fees because they are all thinking about the next generation who would have to pay student fees.
LESSONS TO BE DRAWN	They feel a social responsibility towards the new intellectual generation.
CONTACTS	<p>The National Union of Students in Hungary (HÖÖK)</p> <p>Name of the contact person: Norbert Miskolczi</p> <p>Phone number: +36 1 460-0575</p> <p>E-mail miskolczi.norbert@hook.hu</p> <p>Address: 1055 Budapest, Markó utca 7. II/1.</p> <p>Country: Hungary</p> <p>Website : www.hook.hu</p>

Hungary, case 3



TITLE	PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF THE NATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR EAFRD IN HUNGARY
PARTNERS	<p>National Society of Conservationists</p> <p>Its status is a NGO.</p> <p>The organisation has 108 member groups.</p> <p>Partners were: Env-in-Cent Ltd., PriceWaterhouseCoopers</p> <p>Other members of the SEA Team: Envigraph Bt., 1 expert of the Ministry of Environment and Waters, 1 expert of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development</p>
PLACE	Hungary National territory (but also working at European level)
DATE	Timeframe: SEA Expert work started in early October 2006. The environmental report was finalised in January 2007 and the European Commission accepted the report in August 2007.
FIELD	Governance of (European) public programmes - Environment preservation
OBJECTIVE	<p>Public participation in the strategic environmental assessment of the national programme for EAFRD in Hungary</p> <p>The meaning of civil dialogue is: It's bilateral exchange of information between players of the NGO society and the government. It means that civil society has the opportunity to express their position in governmental and Parliamentarian decision-making processes, their input is taken into account and they get feedback on their views raised.</p>
DESCRIPTION	<p>According to the Directive 2001/42/EC and its national transposition (Govt Decree 2/2005 /1.11./) the national Programme ("New Hungary Rural Development Programme") determining the use of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development had to undergo a Strategic environmental assessment (SEA). The above legislation, as well as the Aarhus Convention, rule that the process should also involve the public, and they also regulate the ways.</p> <p>The National Society of Conservationists, Friends of the Earth Hungary was part of the consortium preparing the SEA and as such, was responsible for the public participation process linked to the SEA. Directly, NSC was approached by Env-in-Cent Consulting Ltd.</p> <p>It is important for NSC that public participation is carried out in a profound manner and a meaningful way, especially in cases with such a deep environmental impact.</p>

Hungary, case 3



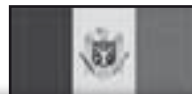
<p>METHODOLOGY</p>	<p>The public participation process was carried out over a three month period with 30 days for comments on the environmental report. All documents were posted on the Society's website and sent by mail in paper form or on CD if requested. People could also request email notifications when new documents were posted on the website. Press releases were issued at milestones of the process and an advertisement was placed in one of the largest national newspapers when the commenting period began. Personal invitations to participate were sent on two occasions to more than 100 organisations, including NGOs, by email. The public was able to send comments electronically or by regular mail and there were open meetings in two cities. A "SEA Forum" including authorities, scientific bodies, environmental and agricultural NGOs was organised, with access to working documents. The public's comments were considered by both the SEA expert team and the Ministry.</p> <p>Furthermore, we can note public authorities used the following tools for civil dialogue:</p> <p>Access to information: by webpage (internet), paper-based distribution upon request</p> <p>Active information dissemination: press release, advertisement in a national daily, direct mail to about 100 organisations (expert institutions, NGOs, unions), regular notification of those registering via the web.</p> <p>Consultation with the "affected public" and authorities, direct participation: comments any time to any public document, forum of 20 experts (govt and NGO), public debate via conference and two regional forums, consulting the National Environmental Council (tripartite advisory body to the government).</p> <p>Integration of public comments: integration of public comments into the SEA, integration of the SEA's findings into the Programme (the Ministry's responsibility).</p>
<p>RESULTS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considerable public interest : <p>More than 100 NGOs were invited to the process directly</p> <p>SEA Forum had 24 members</p> <p>Public interest: 23 + 29 people participated in the conferences</p> <p>21 organisations expressed 68 proposals and 42 comments</p> <p>4 authorities sent 48 comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEA team took into account 95% of the comments • Personal meeting with State Secretary, who personally decided to include SEA proposals – generally positive approach • Reaching all potentially interested, wide-spread, active public participation • Discussion on water management resulted in compromise • During the process, the Ministry showed interest and openness towards the SEA. Later: more SEAs and other environmental assessments initiated by the Ministry

Hungary, case 3



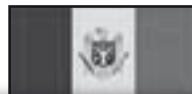
ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION	<p>The major merit was that the public participation process was carried out over a three month period with 30 days for comments on the environmental report. I.e. public participation was not limited to a specific phase of the SEA process. The SEA process reached all potentially interested; wide-spread, active public participation developed.</p>		
LESSONS TO BE DRAWN	<p>Challenges:</p> <p>Most recent documents of the Programme were not published</p> <p>The Ministry did not agree upon the allocation-based assessment of the Programme</p> <p>Specific consultation on (irrigation) weakened the SEA</p> <p>No official feedback from Ministry how they included SEA findings and recommendations into the Program</p> <p>Therefore, no specific feedback to partners possible</p> <p>Significant changes (independent of SEA) in the Program after SEA</p> <p>An NGO attacked SEA, including NSC</p> <p>Challenges identified included, inter alia, the potential for a conflict of interest situation for the Society in carrying out this role. The misunderstanding about the different roles of the Society arose from the fact that the Society on one hand conducted the public participation process of the SEA and on the other hand commented on the Plan and Programme (but not the SEA report!). This was possible because the Society has two departments which work independently. It was one of the departments managing the public participation process and the other department commenting on the Plan and the Programme. What would prevent such misunderstandings over the long run would be to establish an enterprise for such entrepreneurial (consultancy) activities. Another challenge was the lack of official feedback from the Ministry as to how they incorporated the SEA findings and recommendations into the programme, particularly given that the programme underwent significant changes after the SEA was carried out.</p>		
<table border="0"> <tr> <td data-bbox="113 917 365 1104"> CONTACTS </td> <td data-bbox="365 917 1039 1104"> <p>National Society of Conservationists Name of the contact person: Teodora Dönsz Phone number: +36 1 2167297 E-mail: ddori@mtvsz.hu Address: Ulloi ut 91/b, 1091 Budapest Country: Hungary www.mtvsz.hu</p> </td> </tr> </table>		CONTACTS	<p>National Society of Conservationists Name of the contact person: Teodora Dönsz Phone number: +36 1 2167297 E-mail: ddori@mtvsz.hu Address: Ulloi ut 91/b, 1091 Budapest Country: Hungary www.mtvsz.hu</p>
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Romania, case 1



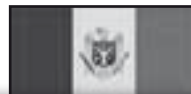
TITLE	ESTABLISHING A WASTE MANAGEMENT SERVICE IN THE COMMUNE OF IANCU JIANU
PARTNERS	<p>The partners taking part in this project were: a community based organization (CBO) – Humanity Romm, the mayorality of the Iancu Jianu commune, Olt County Council and the Olt County Agency for Employment.</p> <p>The partnership between the local mayorality and the CBO was a funding condition for the project. The project was financed through the PHARE programme.</p> <p>The mayorality of Iancu Jianu commune ensured the management of the project and the initiative group was in charge of the technical part. The County Council Olt co-financed the project with 10%, and because of this, they supervised the procurements made within the project. The CBO managed to obtain the support of the County Agency for Employment and they covered 75% of the salaries paid by the waste management company.</p>
PLACE	The project was implemented in the commune of Iancu Jianu, county of Dolj.
DATE	The project started in September 2003 and ended in December 2005.
FIELD	Community development, local economic development.
OBJECTIVE	The project initiated by Humanity Romm aimed to contribute to the development of the community it represents by addressing three distinct issues: lack of employment for members of the Roma community, lack of a waste management system that was creating an insalubrious environment and lack of resources for the activities of the local folklore assembly.
DESCRIPTION	In the commune of Iancu Jianu, 21% of the population belongs to the Roma ethnic group. Many families within the Roma group have been depending on the Minimum Income Guaranteed by Law for a number of years. In addition to this the commune lacked the appropriate infrastructure for a waste management system. Thus domestic trash was thrown at the village periphery, damaging the environment and creating serious hygiene problems. The leader of the CBO who at the same time was a recognised leader of the Roma group found out about the opportunity to set up a waste management community enterprise through a PHARE Programme focused on improving living conditions in Roma communities. Thus he organised various meetings with the villagers in order to decide how they should use the funds. After deciding to set up a waste management enterprise, the CBO started a dialogue with the local mayorality as one of the eligibility criteria was a working partnership with the local public authority. In the beginning, the local mayorality was reluctant to join the partnership especially because they could not cover the requested financial contribution (10% of the project budget). The community group managed to obtain financial support for the project from the County Council and from the County Agency for Employment. Thus the local mayorality became a partner without bringing any financial contribution. After the completion of the PHARE Programme and the end of the financial support received through it, the management of the enterprise was handed over to the local mayorality.

Romania, case 1



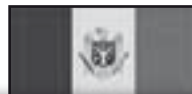
METHODOLOGY	<p>The methods used in order to carry out the process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Public meetings organized with community members (30 – 40 people belonging to both Roma and Romanian communities) in order to establish clear objectives and steps to initiate and continue the dialogue. The meetings with community members have been organized in the beginning but also throughout the process, in order to maintain community members informed and establish together new steps for the process. - Developing and maintaining a partnership with the local public authority – this has not been a smooth process and required perseverance and consistency in the actions organized by the CBO - Creating bridges between the CBO and institutions outside community – the support received from the two institutions acting at the county level – the County Council and the County Agency for Employment
RESULTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A community enterprise that employs local people and improves the sanitary conditions within community has been set up. The community enterprise is being managed at present by the local mayoralty itself. The profit made by the community enterprise is reinvested in order to finance other social and cultural activities initiated by the CBO. - 21 people have been employed and the living conditions of their families have improved - The CBO strengthened its capacity to work with community members and public institutions in order to mobilise resources for the development of the community it represents.
ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stimulating the participation of community members was essential as it gave the community group legitimacy to act and engage in dialogue with the local mayoralty. - It is important to involve local community members throughout the whole process and not only in the initial phase and to keep them informed about the progress of dialogue - Perseverance and consistency are very important when engaging in dialogue with local public authorities - Sometimes it is useful to seek support of public or state institutions outside the community as resources or solutions for local problems can be found at an upper level (regional or national).
LESSONS TO BE DRAWN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create open spaces for participation - Ensure good communication and transparency - Create viable partnerships with public authorities at the local and regional level - Bring to the attention of public authorities the needs of community members, especially of those marginalised
CONTACTS Contact person: Ilie Feraru Phone number: 0040 721.190.983 E-mail: humanity_rom@yahoo.com Address: Macului Street, Iancu Jianu commune, Olt county Country: Romania	

Romania, case 2



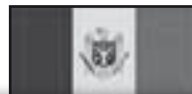
TITLE	ROMANIAN NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR AUTISTIC CHILDREN AND ADULTS (ANCAAR), CRAIOVA BRANCH
PARTNERS	<p>Initiator: Romanian National Association for Autistic Children and Adults (ANCAAR), Craiova branch, Romanian NGO</p> <p>Partners along the process:</p> <p>CeRe – Resource Centre for public participation, Bucharest</p> <p>Komitee Fur Nothilfe Association in Limburg, Germany</p> <p>Vasiliada Association</p> <p>Craiova Local Council</p>
PLACE	Craiova
DATE	Starting date: 2002 - Status: on going
FIELD	Autism is a development deficiency that affects the capacity of a person to communicate and build relationships with other people, as well as the person's capacity to react appropriately to the surrounding social environment.
OBJECTIVE	Awareness raising on the issue of autistic children at local level. Improvement of living conditions of autistic children of Craiova, Dolj county. Setting up and financing of a care center for autistic children.
DESCRIPTION	<p>Three families from Dolj county the children of which suffered from autism, who shared the same problems and concerns, decided in 2002 to gather their strengths and create a specialized institution that would deal with the problems of their children and those of the other children in Craiova who faced the same problem. The organization came as a result of the lack of specialized services for people suffering of autism, and in this sense it is meant to serve the interest of the community. In this way, starting with a group of parents who had children suffering of autism and who joined the National Association for Autistic Children and Adults (ANCAAR) in January 2003, the Craiova branch was created.</p> <p>ANCAAR's mission is to improve the quality of life of autistic people and their families. ANCAAR also established and runs « Dr. Innocenzo Fiore » Center for Rehabilitation for Autistic Children and Youngsters. This center which is administered by ANCAAR is the only institutions that can provide the autistic children in Dolj with the services they need. The data provided by the Center indicates that there in Craiova and its surroundings there are 45 autistic children with ages from 2 to 18. Autism is a development deficiency that affects the capacity of a person to communicate and build relationships with other people, as well as the person's capacity to react appropriately to the surrounding social environment. One cannot classify it as an illness, as it is usually classified, but much rather as a behavioral deficiency, one that is fairly unknown, which cannot be cured, but for which parents, teachers and doctors must work together for the rehabilitation and recovery process that would reintegrate these children into a normal social environment. This can only be done through the development of programmes that would be adjusted to the real needs of these children. The people suffering from this deficiency need psychotherapy directed towards the cognitive – behavioral level, through which adequate behavior can be encouraged or discouraged. From this point of view early and intensive intervention is desirable in order to help gain new abilities.</p>

Romania, case 2



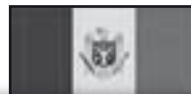
<p>METHODOLOGY</p>	<p>We started with getting familiar with the way in which the institutions of the local government work, the appropriate legislation, building databases with local mass-media contacts, establishing contacts with the mayor hall departments that deal with the issues related to children and their problems.</p> <p>An important step was promoting within the public sphere the issue and the services offered by ANCAAR (through the participation of the members to radio shows, TV broadcasts, newspaper articles). This way, we aimed towards transforming the issue into a public debate which would open our way towards addressing the local government. The fact that ANCAAR already had available a completely equipped center (made on the bases of the received sponsorships), that it had already put together a competitive team of specialists, along with a clear identification of the problems autistic children face, which was further on transposed in a budget, helped build the case in front of the local public authorities and brought the issue on the debate agenda of the Local Council and other local authorities.</p> <p>Among the activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • letters were sent out, lobby actions of local advisors were conducted (meetings, telephone calls and personal ties), a press conference was organised in order to launch the project, present the scope, the objectives and the aimed results of the project • 200 flyers and posters and 700 leaflets were distributed to representatives of the County Council of Dolj and the subordinate departments, as well as to the members of the local community. They explained: what is autism, which are the problems an autistic child is confronted with, the impact of this deficiency on the family, and the ways in which the community can get involved and offer its support. All throughout the process we received support from the Center for Public Participation Resources – CeRe. • Organising a street event which brought the members of ANCAAR, their friends and other children who support its cause in the Public Square of Craiova. A group of actors helped us put together a play representing a usual day in the life of an autistic person. • Informing and meeting with representatives of the County Council in Dolj and the subordinate departments regarding the purpose of the project; • Meeting with representatives of the National Authority for People with Handicap and the County Department for Social Support and Child Protection Dolj; • Organising a world café to explore ways to ensure sustainability for the center.
<p>RESULTS</p>	<p>Following up on these processes, the center is running today in a building which is made available free of charge by Dolj County Council inside the courtyard of the «Sf.Vasile» School for Children with Special Needs from Craiova, along with a court for open space activities. The space was rebuilt and re-divided with the help of sponsorship received from Komitee Fur Nothilfe Association in Limburg, Germany. Using funds raised from the local business people and donations from some Italian and German business people who own businesses in the region we managed to acquire furniture, equip the massage room and the gym, as well as the sensorial stimulation room. Now the center is highly equipped. Twenty two children attend it, thus receiving specialized care and due access to the specialised services that they need.</p> <p>Moreover, there is a lot of help coming from volunteers and from the Vasiliada Association, which is part of the Orthodox Church of Oltenia. The Local Council pays for three specialists who work at the Center.</p> <p>The Center which is now under ANCAAR administration is the only institution where the autistic children in Dolj can receive the services they need. The center has a program which is tailored according to the needs of autistic children and it has the necessary equipment and a team that would apply this methodology. This center can host up to 20 children. It is sad though that the demand for the services offered by the center is much higher than what it can offer and many children are still waiting for a place in the center. The limited resources and the high cost of the current expenses ask for the identification of a source of permanent income.</p>

Romania, case 2



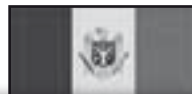
<p>ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION</p>	<p>During its 5 years of existence the Craiova branch of ANCAAR managed to prove that the problems of the persons who suffer from autism are not dealt with at community level. These people still face the lack of comprehension coming from the local authorities that, according to the members of the association, perceive only bits of the problem but not its complexity.</p> <p>Along with the County Council Dolj, during 2007, ANCAAR asked for a public – private partnership with the local government, through which joint financing could have been requested (as states the legislation). After various iterations of these meetings, we were directed towards DGASPC Dolj (The General Department of Social Assistance and Child Protection). DGASPC suggested to hand in the office to the Service for the Recovery of Autistic Children which they created and they run, following the complete withdrawal of the association out of the center’s administration. There was no offer made not even for monitoring the center’s activity, or sharing the knowledge that the current management had acquired during the 5 years since it was running.</p> <p>At the same time we tried to setup a collaboration with the Craiova Local Council in order to shared the costs of the services that the center offers with „Dr. Innocenzo Fiore” Day Center, as well as for sharing grant requests applications. It had thus obtained a small part of the needed funds. The attempt to jointly access the PHARE 2004-2006 financing line for Economic and Social Cohesion SOCIAL SERVICES failed. The people in charge with completing the applications within the Local Council changed their job and the project was lost.</p> <p>For ANCAAR is vitally important to continue to offer services to autistic children who are already 18. Soon, three of the children in the care of the center will be released without being offered any options for their future development or any possibility to have access to specialized services.</p> <p>Solutions must be found in order to make the specialized departments and the professionals working for them more responsible when it comes to accessing funds in partnership with non-governmental organizations which have as common goal the improvement of the quality of life within the community.</p> <p>The funding for the development of projects is sometimes scarce and unpredictable.</p>
<p>LESSONS TO BE DRAWN</p>	<p>The members of the association start with the premises that when a problem appears the people and the community must acknowledge it and must find solutions in order to make things happen. It is especially up to the parents to fight for their children’s rights, like the group of parents of autistic children did, which now owns a “Dr Innocenzo Fiore” Rehabilitation Center where their children receive medical attention as well as other children with similar problems do.</p> <p>The problem that the members of the association faced was that they also realised that in Romania the rights to proper education and specialised health care that autistic children have are heavily breached, thus these children are being excluded from programmes and institutions.</p>
<p>CONTACTS</p>	<p>Romanian National Association for Autistic Children and Adults (ANCAAR), Craiova branch 105, Dimitrie Gerota, Craiova, Dolj County, Romania Phone: +40 251 531 229, +40 351 807 049 E-mail: ancaar_cv@yahoo.com Contact person: Dr. Carmen Alexiu (president), Alexandru-Cătălin Enea (executive director)</p>

Romania, case 3

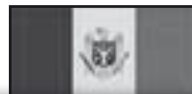


TITLE	THE NGO COALITION FOR STRUCTURAL FUNDS
PARTNERS	CeRe – Resource Center for public participation
PLACE	<p>Well-known Romanian NGOs: Pro Democracy Association, Media Monitoring Agency, CENTRAS – Assistance Center for NGOs, FDSC – Civil Society Development Foundation, ANBCC – National Association of Counselling Bureaus for Citizens, Save the Children Organisation and, of course, CeRe.</p> <p>NGOs that took part in the process were selected based on their reputability and mostly on their willing and availability to involve themselves. For larger consultations, open input from NGOs has been taken into account. (maximum number: 210 NGOs)</p> <p>Status: informal coalition</p>
DATE	Romania, national level
FIELD	Starting date: January 2006 - Status: ongoing
OBJECTIVE	Governance of public (European) programmes - Acces of NGO to European Public funds
DESCRIPTION	Starting with January 2006, The Coalition for Structural Funds is struggling for the NGO requests to be taken into account in the planning, implementation and evaluation processes dedicated to the programmes and projects run through structural funds. Unless NGOs were considered eligible beneficiaries for the structural funds and the application procedure was designed in an accessible manner for the third sector, NGOs would not be able to access structural funds, with all imagined consequences (loss of programmes, lack of services for their direct beneficiaries, weakened third sector, etc.)

Romania, case 3



<p>METHODOLOGY</p>	<p>The Coalition started with an open letter to all ministries to announce the importance of involving NGOs in the structural funds processes.</p> <p>After a first phase of meetings with various ministries, the Coalition held a press conference presenting a report concerning the openness of the ministries. The Coalition gave red, yellow and green flags to each ministry, using the model of European Commission. The impact of this approach in the media was impressive.</p> <p>After this, the Coalition continued to work with the most relevant ministries, mostly in direct meetings, in small working groups. Most of the meetings with the authorities were negotiated and set up in accordance with the public officials' schedule. The place of meeting was usually a public authority office.</p> <p>There were different experiences with different Ministries. For example, the Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family proved to be very open and responsive to NGOs' suggestions regarding the Sectorial Operational Programme for Human Resources Development. Most of the NGOs recommendations were included in the final document and some others will be included in the Complement Programme. In the same time, the Ministry of Administration and Interior was less responsive. Just few of the NGOs recommendations were included in the Sectorial Operational Programme for Administrative Capacity Development. NGOs were promised that some others would be included in the Complement Programme. The Ministry of Finance agreed with the concerns expressed by the NGOs but disagreed with their solutions. It must be mentioned that the most important of the NGOs' requests were addressed/presented to the Ministry of Finances, which was the least responsive of all Ministries approached.</p> <p>Methods that were used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collecting input from NGOs through open request - Petition signing - Conference with stakeholders - Public debate - Focused discussions with Ministries on specific topics - Exposing the decisional actors with international experiences on similar issues - Official requests for specific issues
<p>RESULTS</p>	<p>In all relevant Sectorial Programmes NGOs are now considered eligible beneficiaries. Nevertheless, the applicant guides stating all the procedures for applying to structural funds have been published recently. Therefore, we are still waiting to assess their accessibility for NGOs. Some problems appeared in the Human Resources Development Sectorial Programme – the most important for the third sector, where the conditions for ensuring pre-financing were very difficult. New protests and discussions were engaged, mainly in small working groups.</p> <p>Another result : Members of the third sector were included in all monitoring committees. In some cases, the ministries have requested the Coalition to appoint the members – a situation that the Coalition tried to avoid, as it was lacking the mandate to represent non-profits and to appoint by itself some representatives. Therefore, public announcements were made on e-groups (such as environment, for example) and some consultations took place, but with short-notice.</p> <p>The changes in the government scheme (changing the Minister, for example) led to several problems – the new decision-makers didn't always continue the initiatives of the predecessor. Some members in the monitoring committees were removed without notice, which brought to public protest and other meetings with the official. The final result is that the NGOs representatives remained in the monitoring committee, but as permanent observers.</p>



Romania, case 3

RESULTS	<p>The results obtained by the NGO Coalition for Structural Funds were translated in improved access of Romanian NGOs to Structural funds. The openness of the various managing authorities has not been equal, nevertheless NGOs are listed among beneficiaries and accessible mechanisms for funding their projects are sometimes taken into consideration.</p> <p>There is still a lot of work to be done!</p>
ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. NGOs got mobilised through an informal network 2. The authorities in charge of the management of Structural funds at various levels are considering the participation of NGOs as part of the programmatic and evaluation phases, and as beneficiaries. 3. A needed partner for dialogue for the government appeared without any financial support.
LESSONS TO BE DRAWN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perseverance and consistency lead to results • European documents offer a good base for lobby; nevertheless they sometimes remain unclear • Common action is needed; common action is possible based on NGOs will; common action needs resources (time, communication, availability of the important leaders of third sector) • Government needs NGOs to gather in order to have one (or few) partners of dialogue
CONTACTS <p>CeRe – Resource Center for public participation 1 Ing Zablovski Street, bl. 13 B, ap 5, sect. 1, Bucharest, Romania Phone: + 4 031 10 50 755, Fax: + 4 031 10 50 756 Email: cere@ce-re.ro, Web: www.ce-re.ro Contact person: Oana Preda, Director</p>	

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Good practices listed in this guide come from six European countries and are as follows:

BELGIUM

- Development of the Parc de la Crèche de Morchamps (park)
- The Jardin partagé de la Brouchetterre (communal gardens)
- Raise-plus – Citizen debate on sustainable development

FRANCE

- MESCLUN – Group of Social and Solidarity Economy associations
- Alliance Provence – Consumers and producers united to sustain small-scale farming
- La Kuizin – Shared district canteen

AUSTRIA

- Forest Dialogue
- Dialogue with NGOs in the political decision making process
- Dialogue for participation – Sustainable development issues

BULGARIA

- Organisation of municipalities along the Veselina river to prevent the creation of a municipal waste dump and to present modern, eco-friendly waste disposal approaches and technologies to decision-makers
- Opportunities for improving the living environment and ecology of the North District of Plovdiv City
- Respect for the human rights of children with mental disabilities

ROMANIA

- Establishing a waste management service in the Iancu Jianu district
- Romanian National Association for Autistic Children and Adults (ANCAAR), Craiova branch
- The NGO Coalition for Structural Funds

HUNGARY

- The discontinuation of railway branch lines
- Students' fees at universities
- Public participation in the strategic environmental assessment of the national programme for EAFRD in Hungary

On the www.beingcitizen.eu website, you will be able to read about all the other practices which have served to create this guide, as well as those relating to participatory Democracy in the context of the REACTION project, financed in 2006 by the European Commission.

MOTIVATIONAL ISSUES

Any civil dialogue activity has a starting point and a motivation whether it results from civil society or political decision-makers.

On first analysis, we find that:

- 11 out of 18 initiatives deal to a greater or lesser degree with issues relating to the quality of living surroundings, the environment and sustainable development.
- 6 Civil Dialogue projects are part of a general movement to co-construct public policies, whether this be in a formal context (evaluation of the environmental impact of the EAFRD in Hungary, the coalition of NGOs for Structural Funds in Romania, Forest Dialogue in Austria), or a more informal framework (Raise-plus, Dialogue with NGOs and Dialogue for Participation in Austria);
- 4 examples illustrate how civil dialogue can be incorporated into Social and Solidarity Economy

organisations (MESCLUN, Alliance Provence, La Kuizin in France, and the establishment of a waste management service in Iancu Jianu in Rumania);

- 2 initiatives were in relation to the rights and living and care conditions of handicapped people;
- 1 initiative related to the economic conditions of education.

It is clear that the issue of the environment is largely shared at European level, even though the initiatives presented in this guide are not necessarily representative. However, there is no doubt that nature is a common possession of society and its protection must be subject to agreement amongst all parties to be effective. The majority of the initiatives presented herein have had concrete results regarding the quality of life. This is all the more so as the principle of sustainable development designates governance as the condition sine qua non of constructive relations between economy, social framework and environment.

The definition of public policy relating to civil society and other sections of society (companies, unions, etc.) is also at the heart of the debate.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

This fits in with a change in the authorities' attitude vis-à-vis democracy: to be legitimate, decisions and wide-reaching programmes can no longer be imposed in a "Top-down" fashion. Moreover, the European Commission has made this a prerequisite in the definition and implementation by the Member-States of regional European policy¹. This trend sometimes goes over the heads of public authorities when they omit to consult the parties involved: these latter take matters into their own hands and demand dialogue, as was demonstrated by the Coalition for Structural Funds in Romania.

THE METHODS USED

The methods used differ according to whether citizen involvement manifests itself in a spontaneous fashion, in a situation of social tension faced with recognisable problems, such as the respect of the environment or the dignity of handicapped people, or in a formal context relating to the authorities.

In the first cases, with the aim of conducting dialogue with those administrations responsible for causing disquiet, the first phase is to create a power struggle which is physical (by street demonstrations, for example, or repeated contact with political representatives or administrative people in charge) and also

¹ Article 11 of REGULATIONS (EC) No 1083/2006 OF THE COUNCIL of the 11th July, 2006, containing general provisions on the European Fund for Regional Development, the Social European Fund and the Cohesion Fund, and abrogating regulations (EC) no 1260/1999 :

Partnership : The objectives of the fund are pursued in close co-operation (hereinafter referred to as "partnership"), with the Commission and each Member State. Each Member State organises, as needed, and complying with regulations and national practices in force, a partnership with authorities and bodies such as: a) regional, local and urban authorities and other competent authorities; b) economic and social partners; c) any other suitable organisation representing civil society, environmental partners, non-governmental organisations and organisations in charge of promoting equality between men and women. The Member State designates the most representative partners at national, regional and local levels and in the economic, social, environmental or other fields (hereinafter referred to as "partners"), complying with regulations and national practices, taking into account the requirement to promote equality between men and women, as well as sustainable development by incorporating requirements regarding protection and improvement of the environment.

symbolic by increased media involvement.

Thus, the widest mobilisation possible enables a critical mass to be achieved and, at the very least, to obtain the basis for negotiation, as was demonstrated by the Bulgarian experience to deinstitutionalise autistic children. However, nothing can guarantee results.

The approach described by Social and Solidarity Economy structures is of interest because it shows that dialogue at several levels: with citizens, companies, other associations and authorities can be prolonged through economic activity. Economic citizenship is therefore an innovative means of getting messages out in society, and also of taking part in its transformation.

Physical meetings also appear to be essential in any Civil Dialogue process. Their frequency, location and the type of activities are equally factors which contribute to the quality and conviviality of exchanges.

Distance communication with computer tools: websites, e-mail, discussion lists, blogs, shared calendars and online databases also prove on their part to be excellent means for dialogue between several people and groups. Their anonymous dimension enables everyone to express themselves without any pressure. The issue of moderating these spaces of expression remains crucial for the debate to be constructive. By functioning as a place of storage and retrieving background resources for meetings and conferences, tools associated with the Internet enable discussions to be organised, specific information to be provided to the parties involved in a dialogue which can sometimes become very technical (environmental evaluation of the FEADER, for example, or questions relating to forest management).

Generally speaking, perfecting reports assisted by surveys with the aim of actively seeking technical, organisational and administrative solutions would seem to be a good way of solving complex situations where there is an emergency.

However, the conditions for implementing such measures are a determining factor. The outcome, when identified or identifiable, is dependent on

the resources allocated. An informal group of citizens is more likely to run out of steam if there is no organisation providing support in terms of logistical or organisational means, expertise or finance.

Furthermore, the time and availability of actors participating comprise de facto a vital component in participatory and citizens' democracy.

LOCAL CHALLENGES GLOBAL CHALLENGES

To conclude, we find that 11 projects had the aim of implementing measures or creating local facilities: care centres, waste management services, shared canteen, shared premises, direct solidarity between producers and consumers, etc.

The other projects concern more general objectives, and step in regarding the definition and implementation of public policies.

It is the uniting of these two types of measures, i.e. local and global, that characterises organised civil society and herein lies its strength.

The capacity of civil society to consider specific needs, to offer concrete solutions in the field, and, in parallel, representing and promoting them at the public policy level provides the basis for its legitimacy, of which Civil Dialogue is an essential component.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EFFECTIVE AND SUSTAINABLE CIVIL DIALOGUE

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EFFECTIVE AND SUSTAINABLE CIVIL DIALOGUE

On the initiative of the think tank “Pour la Solidarité,” partners from former, recent and new Member States have gathered to consider what circumstances might improve the dialogue between actors in European civil society and ensure that participatory democracy which is part of the Lisbon Treaty becomes a reality throughout Europe. The partners have thus formulated ten recommendations to make Civil Dialogue stronger and more effective and participatory democracy longer-lasting and more plausible.

RECOMMENDATION N°1: MAKE CIVIL DIALOGUE “TANGIBLE”

Before starting the process of civil dialogue, it is appropriate to inform participants, so that they can familiarise themselves with existing practices in their own country, region or community. As the process is complex, it is important that the actors involved share the same vision of civil dialogue.

Communication and publicity are the keywords in the process of successful civil dialogue. Communication relating to the process will give it a better foundation and it will enjoy increased legitimacy and credibility. It will strengthen commitment by actors who have decided to become involved in the process. The first stage will consist of informing actors about the present issues and the opportunities available to become part of the process. Communication will then be required right throughout the project to highlight the stages completed and work done. Finally, communication relating to the results obtained is equally necessary to enable evaluation of the results and continue motivating actors in a more permanent dialogue. Information and Communication Technologies might play a very effective role in communication and the project’s publicity: blogs, forums and other multimedia tools are all means which will enable actors to become informed and to express themselves.

RECOMMENDATION N° 2: PERSEVERE

Most of the experiences we have collected and analysed have demonstrated the difficulty of attaining the anticipated objectives, because there is a significant risk of the project running out of steam. This is why it is fundamentally important for actors, particularly associations, to show a great deal of perseverance and motivation to restart discussions when they appear to be coming to a full stop. The process of civil dialogue is a long-term one which must be regularly revitalised to avoid it grinding to a halt. To this end, using organisers or independent, neutral moderators can prove to be very useful for sustaining motivation of actors in the project. These outside experts can put their skills and experience to work for actors involved and will be given the tasks of organising and managing participation. The intervention of an outside intermediary is of great use in bottom-up projects to help actors in civil society with their participation. If it is a top-down project, i.e., started by the authorities, the creation by these latter of an organisation dedicated to linking together all partners will enable the project to be managed in the best way.

RECOMMENDATION N° 3: ENSURE TRANSPARENCY

Transparency is essential right throughout the dialogue process: transparency in regard to objectives and the method used. This third recommendation is linked with the first recommendation relating to the communication which should take place. Indeed communication enables one to be informed about the process and the parties can react to this information. The ins and outs of the project must be presented in a clear manner whilst leaving margin for manoeuvre and opportunities to change during the project. There is another determining factor in the transparency of the project: the availability of the actors involved. It must be possible to call on them to obtain information. To do this, one must be able to identify the parties involved. They will provide the complete contact details.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EFFECTIVE AND SUSTAINABLE CIVIL DIALOGUE

A clear and public communication system between the parties involved will be put forward from the beginning of the project to establish transparency.

RECOMMENDATION N° 4: ENVISAGE THE PROCESS IN THE LONG-TERM

Civil dialogue must be envisaged on a long-term basis and not as a “one shot” measure to meet some one-off need which justifies it. Civil dialogue must become a “culture,” a process to which one has recourse to settle matters for the common good. During its implementation, the temporal dimension is also of great importance given that the process takes time: time to contact participants, to define the methodology, to make objectives clear, and obtain communicative results. Be this as it may, to help projects succeed, it is appropriate to set precise deadlines, with a schedule laid out from the beginning, and planning for various stages to obtain intermediate results, to prevent running out of steam, procrastination and other pitfalls.

RECOMMENDATION N° 5: ENSURE THAT RESULTS ARE PUBLICISED

Results of the process must be made public in order to enable the project to be evaluated and to fulfil transparency objectives. Publicising results will also enable to weigh up the legitimacy and efficacy of using civil dialogue procedures. Furthermore, if goals are achieved, it will help to prolong the process insofar as partners will find it advantageous and a perk to use this approach in the decision-making process.

RECOMMENDATION N° 6: CHOOSE THE BEST TOOL TO DIALOGUE

The experiences collected for this project prove it: there exists a multitude of tools to create and manage dialogue between various actors: consultation, participation, discussion, etc. In this way, several configurations are possible and choosing one depends on several factors: human and financial means available for the project, the degree of involvement of actors and partners, the objectives pursued, the context, etc. These conditions will determine the most suitable method. However, it is advisable, particularly for initiatives which directly involve citizens, to use innovative participatory methods; methods which facilitate discussion, stimulate thought and encourage them to express their opinion. The surroundings in which debate takes place are equally important: it is suitable to choose an open meeting place where all players can express themselves without formalities.

The initiators and organisers of the process must be aware of the various levels of civil dialogue - information, consultation, involvement, collaboration and empowerment - and should motivate them depending on the situation. Ideally, citizen participation should be encouraged so that they collaborate more in making the decisions that concern them. This latter form of participation tallies with the last level on the participation scale, i.e., empowerment.

RECOMMENDATION N° 7: FOCUS DIALOGUE ON THE OBJECTIVES

Civil dialogue only has a *raison d'être* if it is focused on attaining specific objectives and if it is not auto-centred on one method. It is not a case of dialoging for dialoging's sake. The dialogue created between actors must be orientated towards a goal which these latter will have set. Civil dialogue is well and truly a method in itself serving decision-making and dealing with a common and public problem.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EFFECTIVE AND SUSTAINABLE CIVIL DIALOGUE

RECOMMENDATION N° 8: CONSIDER CIVIL DIALOGUE AS A DIALOGUE BETWEEN ALL TYPES OF STAKEHOLDERS

Civil dialogue is generally considered as dialogue between authorities and associations in civil society. However, as we indicated in the introductory section, civil dialogue can also designate dialogue between non-institutional actors. So, one must not neglect other actors whose influence is important in society: here we are talking mainly about economic and media spheres. Civil dialogue as dialogue between citizens and associations in civil society must neither be neglected. It represents a very important part of civil dialogue because it directly relates to citizens' opinions, needs and expectations with regard to certain matters of general interest dealt with by associations.

There are numerous advantages to recognising associations in civil society as entities with whom to communicate. Indeed, associations bring their expertise and qualitative analysis of the impact of decisions. In addition, associations often serve as relays to link up with certain groups or marginalised individuals.

RECOMMENDATION N° 9: CARRY OUT EVALUATION OF THE PROCESS AND ITS IMPACT

Evaluation of the civil dialogue process is of importance for several reasons. Firstly, as the process is orientated towards predetermined objectives, it is vital to evaluate the results to ascertain whether these aims have been achieved and to take the necessary measures in the event of failure. Next, evaluation of the method is of interest as it enables one to have feedback on the procedure and, if need be, to improve it in real time and on an ongoing basis. Therefore, evaluation has educational

merit. Finally, continuous project evaluation will potentially enable the programme to be re-orientated.

RECOMMENDATION N° 10: ENSURE THAT A GOOD COMBINATION OF AGES AND PEOPLE FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE PARTICIPATE

Dialogue initiators must ensure that women, men, young and old people are equally represented when taking part in the procedure. As certain groups are generally less called upon or less available, measures to facilitate their taking part (for example, arranging the times of meetings to make concessions for private and professional life, or the possibility of using purely oral methods of expression) will be adopted.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

Through this transnational project aiming to “Foster Civil Dialogue in Europe,” we wanted to draw from the successful experiences which took place in Austria, Belgium, France, Hungary and Romania.

From these varied accounts by participants in civil dialogue, we hope that readers of this guide will be able to find, not only a source of inspiration in the work to take action themselves to change their surroundings, but also a source of motivation to take part in improving the social well-being of their district.

Far from putting forward the possibilities of civil dialogue as a universal method, this compendium simply teaches us that exchange, participation and involvement of civil society, organised or not, has already, on several occasions and in different contexts, enabled citizens to sway political decision-making and affect economic systems in which citizens’ influence is often lacking, in the “bottom-up” approach.

In the same way, decision-makers from representative democracy and institutions are sometimes called upon to start a process of discussion, consultation and participation about large projects in the area and are not really regarding on the people that part and get involved in tackling the problems which are not always easy to resolve, or of an inspiring nature.

In this top-down approach, it is fundamentally important to be able to, and to know how to motivate citizens and all of civil society in a representative way, in order for these projects to become a true expression of the concerns and needs of future users and residents in the area in the context of genuine shared projects.

Civil society must be able to continually educate, motivate and organise its members at an individual and collective scale in order to enable constant dialogue and ensure permanent representation of civil society in all its diversity during these gatherings.

Putting together this work on civil dialogue aims to contribute to its development at local level and on the larger European level.

Certainly, the experiences listed in this guide only represent a tiny part of what may have been achieved in the history of our societies. They do

however represent an interesting account on the standing of civil dialogue in a Europe constantly under construction and provide information on the problems experienced in several European Union countries.

Thus, transversally, perusal of these experiences reveals that civil dialogue is firmly rooted in the practices of partner countries in this project whether they be old, recent or new members of the European Union. From Bulgaria to France, civil dialogue practices exist. They take different forms and sometimes are a reaction to, or supportive of, public policy, and the project affecting the areas.

Whether they were of an initiating or a participatory nature in the civil dialogue, the experiences accumulated indicate us every time that citizens (residents, those who benefit, users, victims, activists) involved in this sharing process have a better understanding about the notion of common good and involvement in the future of their area.

In effect, civil dialogue in whatever form, puts the individual into an educational and instructive movement which enables him to give meaning to his living environment and make it his. Therefore, people will be ready to help real, valuable citizen expression to emerge and to assume the conditions of change developed in their environment, thus becoming actors in the social transformation of their district. They will have also acquired a capacity to listen to others, and for contact and exchange. Critical thinking will equally have been helped, all in all helping to contribute to increasing the skills of the citizens involved, concerned parties and actors in social networking and the development of their surroundings, whether this is of a regional, legislative, economic, social or cultural nature. Capitalising on these civil dialogue experiences takes place at a local and European scale.

In every place where activities have taken place to foster dialogue, regional actors recall what happened and a positive or negative impression of this experience persists.

In order for these lessons to be made available, adapted and re-used by civil society itself when faced with problems and challenges, such as living environment, health, human rights, local development and economy, we have chosen in this guide to concentrate on the systematic and

methodological approach of the experience. We have thought it necessary to highlight the conditions of human resources, structures and tools made available for new, effective civil dialogue projects to come about.

As such, it is about contributing to the added-value which the civil dialogue process brings, by suggesting that clear and defined methodological framework is combined with innovation and free expression, from which new initiatives can always find inspiration.

Legislative measures could also come about to justify the utility of civil dialogue and the requirement for it to be part of the modernisation of our democracies. Nevertheless, defining the principles, implementation methods, and factors guaranteeing quality dialogue with civil society would risk limiting this practice to an over-strict, counter-productive framework in relation to citizen initiatives.

Capitalising on these civil dialogue experiences in regional, national and European structures would today appear to be essential in order to encourage collective forums and creation of practices thus enabling local players, citizens and institutions to be recognised for their local activities and providing for their efforts via networks which are not restricted to local borders.

Europe is like one of the laboratories where civil dialogue is developing in the field as illustrated by the few examples in this guide.

Furthermore, the European Union has made a decisive political commitment for the development and recognition of Civil dialogue in the Treaty of Lisbon (Title II, Article 8 B¹). The text clearly refers to dialogue with civil society: “1. The institutions shall, by appropriate means, give citizens and representative associations the opportunity to make known and publicly exchange their views in all areas of the Union.” Additionally, with its programme “Europe for Citizens,” the European Commission is financially encouraging initiatives along these lines; this guide is an example.

The results are a series of recommendations which would appear important to us to help civil dialogue succeed and firmly establish it in a

relationship of trust and mutual respect.

With the publication of this guide, the project formally reaches its end, but we remain extremely enthusiastic at the thought of continuing our work at a European level, for greater recognition, representativeness and participation of organisations in civil society and of European citizens.

So, see you soon !

¹ The Treaty of Lisbon <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/10-cg14.fr07.doc>

ANNEX I : KEYWORDS

★ASBL - (NFPO)

An A.S.B.L. - Association Sans But Lucratif, or in English, Not-for-Profit Organisation, is a structure which does not take on industrial or commercial activities and does not seek to obtain material gain for its members. It pursues activities with a disinterested objective. NFBOs are mainly active in the group services sector: health, social action, education and culture.

★ASSOCIATION LOI 1901 (FRENCH LAW OF 1901)

Association under the law of the 1st of July, 1901 and the edict of the 16th of August, 1901. "An association is an agreement by which two or more people join their knowledge or their activities in a permanent way, with a goal other than that of partaking of the profits." (Article 1 of the law of the 1st of July, 1901)
Source: www.legifrance.gouv.fr

★BOTTOM-UP

The bottom-up approach suggests the upward movement of ideas, decisions and information from the bottom of a hierarchy or an organisation.

★CIVIL DIALOGUE

Civil Dialogue as defined by the EU Civil Society Contact Group describes an interaction between public institutions and civil society organisations. It goes beyond information and communication, and is based on mutual recognition and responsiveness. It covers various degrees of formalisation, ranging from informal to legally recognised structures, from ad hoc to continuous exchange.
<http://www.act4europe.org/code/en/policy.asp?Page=238&menuPage=214>

★CIVIL SOCIETY

It refers to the set of institutions, organizations and behavior situated between the state, the business world, and the family. Specifically, this includes voluntary and non-profit organizations of many different kinds, philanthropic institutions, social and political movements, other forms of social participation and engagement and the values and cultural patterns associated with them.

H. K. Anheier "Civil Society: Measurement and Policy Dialogue" London: Earthscan, 2003.

★GENDER

Gender refers to proposed social and cultural constructions of masculinities and femininities, like differences in treating of women and men in political or societal life.

★GENDER MAINSTREAMING

Gender Mainstreaming refers to a political strategy implying that gender equality has to be integrated into all decisions, legal frameworks and activities developed within a policy area.

★PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Public participation is defined by the International Association for Public Participation as any process that involves the public in problem-solving or decision-making and that uses public input to make better decisions.
(<http://www.iap2.org>)

There are many forms and levels of participation of the public in processes of decision making and it is very important for people managing such processes to be aware of them in order to choose the most appropriate one for different phases. All these levels are known among theoreticians and practitioners of public or citizen participation as the Ladder of Public Participation or as the International Association of Public Participation calls it The Spectrum of Public Participation.

★SOCIAL AND SOLIDARITY

ECONOMY

Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) designates groups of people* (and not capital), who subscribe to common values and who practise an economic activity (wealth and job creation). The ethic which it defends and principles by which it is run make the concept so original: freedom of membership, surplus not redistributed by payment of the capital invested, democratic management, social utility and territorial anchoring. The SSE therefore meets the desire to “do business differently” and founds its economic practices on an approach which motivates actors and project holders to tackle local and citizen issues.

* co-operatives, societies or associations.

★TOP DOWN

The top-down approach implies the upward movement of ideas, decisions and information from the base of a hierarchy of an organisation.

★SPECTRUM OF PUBLIC

PARTICIPATION

(http://www.iap2.org/associations/4748/files/IAP2%20Spectrum_vertical.pdf)

Informing : to supply the public with objective information in order to help to understand issues, alternatives, opportunities and solutions.
Consulting : to obtain feedback from the public resulting from the analysis of alternatives or decisions. Including : to work directly with the public all throughout the project so that any of the public's preoccupations and hopes are understood and taken into consideration.

ANNEX 2 : QUESTIONNAIRE

* The questions in bold are issued from the short questionnaire (8 questions).

TITLE	TITLE OF THE CIVIL DIALOGUE PROJECT OR ACTION
PARTNERS	<p>Who did you do it with?*</p> <p>PART 1 : Name of the organization which supports the project:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Its status (NGO, public authority...):</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">If it's an NGO, on what is based its representativeness of the civil society?</p> <p>PART 2, Q 5 : Who were the partners (inhabitants, Public authorities, companies, associations, NGOs, foundation, trade-unions,...)</p> <p>PART 2, Q6 : What kind of partnership was it ? Was it a contracting partnership?</p>
PLACE	<p>PART 1 : The organization's scope area (local, national, European...)</p> <p>PART 2, Q 4 : Where did it take place (thank you to precise the exact territory)</p>
DATE	<p>PART 2, Q 3 : When did it start ? How long did it take place?</p>
FIELD	<p>What was the issue addressed?</p> <p>PART 2, Q 12 : What were the themes discussed during the meeting?</p>
OBJECTIVE	<p>Why did you do what you do? / Why did you get involved?</p> <p>PART 2, Q 2 : what was the origin of the project? How did it begin?</p> <p>PART 2, Q 7 : What were the objectives of the partnership?</p>
DESCRIPTION	<p>Why was the issue important?</p> <p>PART 2, Q 1 : What is your project about ? How is it called ? Describe briefly.</p> <p>PART 2, Q 9 : What was the participative format of the project ? (institutional dialogue, Participatory budgeting, local meetings, supra municipal committees, public consultations, "e-democracy",...) Explain</p> <p>PART 2, Q 10 : Were some kinds of mechanisms of representation settled to represent the citizens called on to take part ? (Representatives of a district, of a specific group.... elected or designated)</p> <p>Have you got some pictures or schemes to illustrate your project?</p>
METHODOLOGY	<p>What did you do?</p> <p>PART 1: What is civil dialogue for you?</p> <p>PART 2, Q 11 : What were the practical organisational arrangements of the consultation, of the dialogue ? (How often did you meet, how long did the meeting last? who decided of the date and place of venue, of the agenda of the meeting...?)</p> <p>PART 2, Q 1 5 : What were the tools chosen for the exchanges, for the consultations itself ? (Enquiries with questionnaires, discussion, meeting)</p> <p>PART 2, Q 16 : If the results of the consultation were expressed to the participants, how were they expressed ? if not , why?</p> <p>PART 2, Q 17 : Did you define those tools before starting the citizen participative process ? Or did you define them when the participative process was well under way?</p>

METHODOLOGY	<p>PART 2, Q 18 : Did you set some limits to the citizen participative process (consultation only, power of recommendations, power of decision...) ? If so , what were those limits?</p> <p>PART 2, Q 19 : And if so, who set those limits up ? Or, were they imposed by one of the project partners ?</p> <p>PART 2, Q 20 : When were those limits set up? Prior to the consultation ? When the participative process was well under way ? Posterior to the whole process ?</p> <p>PART 2, Q 21 : Do you think the moment chosen to define the limits to the citizen participative process could have an influence on the project itself ?</p> <p>PART 2, Q 22 : For you what was the use of setting up some limits ?</p> <p>PART 2, Q 23 : Was there an evaluation of the project ? If so, what were the evaluating tools chosen ?</p> <p>PART 2, Q 24 : When were those evaluating tools defined ? Prior to the consultation ? When the participative process was well under way ? posterior to the whole process ?</p>
RESULTS	<p>What was the result you achieved (was this result different from that awaited) ?</p> <p>PART 2, Q 14 : To what extent and in which proportions was the participants opinion taken into account ?</p> <p>PART 2, Q 26 : To what extent the objectives of the partnership have been reached?</p>
ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION	<p>PART 2, Q 13: How far have you been into the participative process ? Did the local actors/the citizens called on to take part finally get a power of discussion ?</p> <p>PART 2, Q 25 What is the evaluation you do of the project: ? a. How many people were involved into the project? Who was the public concerned by the project? c. What kinds of actors were involved into the project, in terms of responsibility ? d. How was this responsibility organised ? At what level ?</p> <p>PART 2, Q 27: Has the experience you describe led to a peculiar sort of partnership between all actors committed into the project ?</p> <p>PART 2, Q 28 : Were there other actors that appeared while implementing the project ?</p> <p>PART 2, Q 36 : Do you think your experience was recognised as a democratic and citizen activity ? By whom ?</p> <p>PART 2, Q 32 : Did you identify a real appropriation of the project and of participatory dynamics by the local actors ? If so, at what phase in the project?</p> <p>PART 2, Q 33 : Do you think the several participants were aware that they were taking part to an experience of civil dialogue ?</p>
LESSONS TO BE DRAWN	<p>Why do you think this result qualifies as good practice ?</p> <p>PART 2, Q 08 : Did the partnership keep on working after the project itself ? If so, how ? Explain</p> <p>PART 2, Q 29 : Do you think some positive points derived directly from this experience of partnership ? If so, explain</p> <p>PART 2, Q 30:and from the experience of consultation itself ?</p> <p>PART 2, Q 31 :What were the negative points of this project that you would like to stress out ?</p> <p>PART 2, Q 34 : Do you think that the local actors have appreciated the initiative and would be ready to repeat it ? Why ?</p> <p>PART 2, Q 35 : Do you think that the local actors were satisfied of the consultation or would they have preferred to play a more important role?</p> <p>PART 2, Q 37 : Any remark ? is there something we didn't ask that you would like talk about ?</p>
CONTACTS	<p>PART 1 : Name of the contact person - Phone number - E-mail - Address - Country - Website :</p>

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For more information about the “Fostering Civil Dialogue in Europe” project, please go to the following website:

www.beingcitizen.eu

★ **Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA)**

“**Europe for Citizens**” programme 2007-2013.

http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/index_fr.html

The aim of this programme is to bring Europe closer to its citizens and to enable them to participate fully in the European construction.

★ **International Association for Public Participation.**

www.iap2.org

★ **Spectrum of Public Participation, 2007.**

http://www.iap2.org/associations/4748/files/IAP2%20Spectrum_vertical.pdf

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www.cedag-eu.org



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