

**The project «EU Border Communities: sharing experiences and practices on refugees' reception and social solidarity» - EUBorCo was funded with the support of the European Union under the Programme "Europe for Citizens"**

**Strand 2 - Measure 2.2 "Networks of Towns"**

**Five (5) events have been carried out within this project:**

**Event 1**

**Participation:** The event involved 78 citizens, including 13 participants from the City of Paionia and Unesco Youth Club of Thessaloniki (Greece), 3 participants from the city of Gevgelija (Republic of North Macedonia), 5 participants from the City of Is-Swieqi and KITE Factory (Malta), 2 participants from the City of Viator (Spain), 1 from the City of Brindisi and 54 participants from the Association CIVITAS SOLIS and the City of Roccella Jonica (Italy).

**Location / Dates:** The event took place in the City of Roccella Jonica, Italy, from 16/02/2019 to 19/02/2019 and it was organised by the Association CIVITAS SOLIS.

**Short description:** The aim of the event was to inaugurate the dialogue and the exchange of experiences and good practices among the partner cities and organisations concerning the challenges they face on refugees' reception and social solidarity.

The agenda of the 3-day transnational event included networking activities with the participation of the local associations and neighboring municipalities, study visits in the village of Camini to explore the work done by Jungi Mundu regarding refugees' support and inclusion and also to Gioiosa Jonica to learn about the services developed by Eurocoop Servizi Association to the local community of refugees. In the epicenter of the 3-day transnational event was the organization of a public conference in the former convent of the Minimi (Roccella Jonica) entitled "The role of local communities in the promotion of active citizenship, volunteering and solidarity" and an open discussion held in the City Hall of Gioiosa Jonica with about the promotion of a very active citizenship in Europe and the exchange of experiences on refugees' crisis management and social solidarity. Finally, open space activities were organised and more precisely, a March of Solidarity in Roccella Jonica Seafront with the participation of numerous local citizens and associations and a symbolic olive-tree planting in the Marina of the Graces, where also the art work of a local artist inspired by the continuous refugees' reception in the area was presented for the first time together with a poem written by a young refugee hosted for a while there.

**Event 2**

**Participation:** The event involved 80 citizens, including 11 participants from the City of Paionia and Unesco Youth Club of Thessaloniki (Greece), 2 participants from the city of Gevgelija (Republic of North Macedonia), 3 participants from the City of Varna - European Youth Capital of Varna Association (Bulgaria), 8 participants from the City of Roccella Jonica and Association CIVITAS SOLIS, Siderno (Italy) and 56 participants from the City of Is-Swieqi and KITE Factory (Malta).

**Location / Dates:** The event took place in the City of Is-Swieqi, Malta, from 11/04/2019 to 14/04/2019 and it was co-organised by the KITE Factory and the Is-Swieqi Local Council.

**Short description:** The aim of the event was to go further in the understanding both of the common European approaches as well as the local ones with regards to the refugees' crisis management and reception through a dialogue with the important associations and stakeholders with relevant experience, as well as to share ideas on how we could improve our work in the field influencing and engaging more actively local stakeholders and citizens.

The agenda of the 3-day transnational event included open public presentations concerning (a) the initiatives that the City Council of Is-Swieqi took for the integration of refugees and migrants, (b) the Present of Europe and Social Solidarity and (c) the migrants and refugees' situation in Malta including the main challenges that the Maltese Institutions and the refugees' and migrants' communities face. An open public discussion with three Maltese organizations (Hal Far Outreach Project, Malta Football Association SR

Football Social Responsibility, Migrant Women Association) that are active in refugee and migrants' integration in Malta was also organised. Moreover, an afternoon conference took place in the Is-Swieqi City Hall focusing on the importance of integration of migrants and refugees, the role of the media in the process, the personal, community, national, and international roles to promote integration. Finally, the transnational event included two important visits: The first was to the Archdiocese of Malta where the Archbishop accepted the EuBorCo delegation in the archdiocese premises and engaged in a discussion with us, focused on the current situation of refugees and the initiatives concerning their integration in the different countries of the delegations, as well as, the importance of religious institutions as advocacy voices concerning the wellbeing and rights of refugees. The second one was in the Peace Lab which located just across the Refugee centre of Hal Far. There they EuBorCo delegation spoke with Fr. Dionisju Mintoff who has been one of the most vocal advocates for the rights of refugees and migrants, as well as actively participating in giving them opportunities to start a new life in Malta.

### **Event 3**

**Participation:** The event involved 84 citizens, including 5 participants from the Association CIVITAS SOLIS, Roccella Jonica (Italy), 2 participants from the City of Viator (Spain), 1 participant from KITE Factory, Is-Swieqi (Malta), 10 participants from the Varna European Youth Capital Association, Varna (Bulgaria), 8 participants from the City of Gevgelija, Republic of North Macedonia and 58 participants from the City of Paionia and Unesco Youth Club of Thessaloniki (Greece).

**Location / Dates:** The event took place in the City of Paionia (Polykastro and Goumenissa) in Greece from 11/11/2019 to 14/11/2019 and it was organised by the Municipality of Paionia.

**Short description:** The aim of the event was to exchange experiences and practices for the development of a common action plan emphasizing on the role of the local authorities (municipalities), associations, NGOs and citizens with regards to the migrants and refugees' reception and support. Local initiatives, active citizenship, social solidarity and volunteerism were on the top of the agenda of the transnational event.

The agenda of the 3-day transnational event at the Municipality of Paionia (Greece) included networking activities with the participation of local representatives, stakeholders and associations, study visits in emblematic spots of the Municipality of Paionia that are directly related to the Refugee Crisis and specifically to the Hospitality Center of N. Kavala and in the area of the open camp in 2015 at Idomeni. The chronicle and the state of the art concerning the Refugee Crisis as it was experienced by the locals was also presented.

In the epicenter of the 3-day transnational event was the organization of a public conference in the Cultural Center of Polykastro "Presentation of actions and good practices within the framework of the project EUBorCo" followed by a workshop on the elaboration of a common intervention strategy to promote the integration of refugees and migrants. Finally, two important meetings took place at Thessaloniki, the first with the Deputy Minister of Interior (Sector Macedonia-Thrace) Mr Theodore Karaoglou where the EuBorCo delegation presented the project and the second with the Head of the Department of the General Secretariat for Youth in Greece Mr Charalambos Papaioannou where youth policies and initiatives in correlation with refugees' and migrants' support were the main topic of discussion.

### **Event 4**

**Participation:** The event involved 78 citizens, including 5 participants from the Association CIVITAS SOLIS, Roccella Jonica (Italy), 1 participant from KITE Factory, Is-Swieqi (Malta), 10 participants from the Varna European Youth Capital Association, Varna (Bulgaria), 8 participants from the City of Paionia and Unesco Youth Club of Thessaloniki (Greece) and 54 participants from the City of Gevgelija, Republic of North Macedonia.

**Location / Dates:** The event took place in the City of Gevgelija in the Republic of North Macedonia from 14/11/2019 to 17/11/2019 and it was organised by the Municipality of Gevgelija.

**Short description:** The aim of the event was to understand the local approaches on the refugees' reception and hospitality along with social solidarity and active citizenship. To this extent, the 3-day transnational event included open discussions and a workshop concerning the experience of locals on the Refugee Crisis of 2015 and the initiatives started by citizens. Moreover, they had the opportunity to exchange knowledge and express their experiences about the refugee crisis, and the issue of immigration in general. Finally, a study visit was organised in the refugees' reception center at Vinojug where the EuBorCo delegation had the chance to talk the refugees, who live in North Macedonia and have been granted asylum.

### **Event 5**

**Participation:** The event involved 78 citizens, including 5 participants from the Association CIVITAS SOLIS,

Roccella Jonica (Italy), 2 participants from the City of Brindisi (Italy), 10 participants from the City of Paionia and Unesco Youth Club of Thessaloniki (Greece), 4 participants from the City of Gevgelija, Republic of North Macedonia, 2 participants from KITE Factory, Is-Swieiqi (Malta) and 55 participants from the Municipality of Viator.

**Location / Dates:** The event took place in the City of Viator in Spain from 23/01/2020 to 26/01/2020 and it was organised by the Municipality of Viator.

**Short description:** The aim of the event was to enhance the transfer of Good Practices between countries and organisations, thereby promoting the role of local communities, active citizenship, volunteering, and solidarity, as well as understanding the threats that Euroscepticism poses.

To this extent, the 3-day transnational event included networking activities and a team game “The refugee is me”, open discussions and public events. During the first public event international invitees shared their experiences on refugees’ crisis management in their cities and also watched good practices and projects developed in Viator and Almeria as whole in this field. Also, the second public event also focused on refugees’ reception management in Almeria. Invited speakers - representatives of international and local NGOs shared their experiences and exchanged ideas, while they were also referred in detail to the challenges they face. Finally, Euborco delegation had the opportunity to interact with women immigrants and refugees during a special lunch prepared by them for all the participants.

For more information about the project, you may visit the project website <http://euborcoproject.eu/>



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