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PROJECT

## **Strengthening European Identity in times of crisis**

CERV Programme

**Network of Towns • Red de Ciudades**

### **EVENT IV**

**Andrychow (Poland)**

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## **ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION: MY DAILY LIFE AS EUROPEAN**



MUNICIPALITY OF PADRÓN  
(SPAIN)



MUNICIPALITY OF ANDRYCHÓW  
(POLAND)



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## INTRODUCTION

### CITIZENS, EQUALITY, RIGHTS AND VALUES - PROGRAMME (CERV)

Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values has the general objective of protecting and promoting the rights and values enshrined in the Treaties, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and the applicable international human rights conventions, in particular by supporting organizations of civil society and other stakeholders active at local, regional, national and transnational levels, as well as fostering democratic and civic participation, in order to promote and further develop open, rights-based, democratic, equal and inclusive societies, founded in the rule of law.

Networks of Towns will give towns and municipalities the possibility to deepen and intensify their cooperation and debate, develop sustainable networks and outline their long-term vision for the future of European integration.

The Commission expects Networks of Towns to reflect on a new narrative for Europe, one that is people-riented, forward-looking and constructive, and that would be more engaging for the younger generation in particular. Projects may be based on the outcome of citizens' consultations and may lead to debates about specific ways to create a more democratic EU, to encourage citizens to re-engage with the EU and help them develop a stronger sense of ownership of the European project.

### PROJECT. STRENGTHENING EUROPEAN IDENTITY IN TIMES OF CRISIS

"Strengthening European Identity in times of crisis" is a project of Network of Towns framed in "Citizens, Equality, Rights and values" programme, promoted by the City Council of Padrón, Spain, whose main objective is to promote the sense of belonging to the EU, offer the opportunity to know EU Citizenship's rights, our common values and democratic norms to all citizens of different European realities, as well as reinforcing mutual understanding through intercultural dialogue and support good local governance for an optimal role in the Europe of the Future.

In cooperation of partners from 16 countries, the project will be carried out around 5 thematic meetings in five different cities: Padrón (Spain), Burdeos (Francia), Hal Kirkop (Malta), Andrychow (Poland) and Kekava (Latvia); in which more than 5000 people will participate directly and indirectly, guaranteeing equal access, without any type of discrimination, ensuring equality between genders and also offering the opportunity to citizens who have never been involved in similar projects. In line with the objectives and priorities of the CERV programme, the project will focus on promoting active participation at local and european level, by carrying out activities with an innovative methodology: data collection, focus groups, workshops, EU storytelling, cultural visits or exhibitions. It is also intended to bring together young people, who will eventually have a greater knowledge of political processes, institutions and history of the European Union, adressing current issues.

All of this will generate a great impact on citizens since it offers municipalities of all sizes the opportunity to develop and participate in these types of projects and forge true and lasting bonds of friendship between them. Finally, the project will look for alternatives to the challenges it faces, through experiences, opinions and good practices, in order to formulate solutions and propose new ideas.

## EUROPEAN UNION IN OUR DAILY LIFE

The European Union (EU) significantly enhances the daily lives of its citizens through various initiatives. The freedom to work abroad is facilitated by programs like Erasmus Plus and the European Solidarity Corps, fostering cross-cultural collaboration and enriching career experiences. The EU's recognition of national driving licenses allows seamless travel within member states, promoting convenience and tourism.

Moreover, the EU's commitment to mobility is evident in the Schengen Agreement, enabling citizens to move and live freely within the EU. This, coupled with initiatives like the elimination of roaming charges, ensures convenient and cost-effective travel, making exploration and relocation more accessible.

Economic opportunities are streamlined through directives like the European Digital Single Market strategy, simplifying cross-border transactions and supporting entrepreneurship. The recent directive on mobile phone chargers, promoting a universal USB-C standard, showcases the EU's influence in addressing everyday inconveniences and promoting standardized and sustainable solutions. Another example would be the European driving license. Any European can drive a car after passing an exam in any member Estate.

These initiatives align with the EU's strategic visions, promoting economic growth, sustainability, and the well-being of its citizens. In essence, the European Union's impact on citizens' lives extends to both broadening horizons and addressing practical, day-to-day aspects, creating a more interconnected and prosperous European community.

In addition to fostering economic opportunities and facilitating seamless mobility, the European Union (EU) places a significant emphasis on consumer standards and climate action, marking crucial milestones for European citizens. The EU's commitment to sustainable solutions is evident in initiatives such as the directive on mobile phone chargers, promoting a universal USB-C standard.

By addressing everyday inconveniences and advocating for standardized, eco-friendly technologies, the EU contributes to a more environmentally conscious and consumer-friendly market. Furthermore, the EU actively engages in climate action, working towards a greener future through policies that promote clean energy, reduce carbon emissions, and enhance environmental sustainability. These efforts align with the EU's overarching vision of not only enhancing the daily lives of its citizens but also ensuring a more resilient and ecologically responsible European community.



SPAIN



MUNICIPALITY OF PADRÓN

Since its inception, the European Union has been developing rapidly and achieving many successes, which have brought and continue to bring many benefits to the citizens of Europe and around the world.

One of them is for sure stability and the breaking of borders. We have become a European family, which has provided us with more than half a century of peace and prosperity, but not only. This gives Europeans the freedom to choose where they live, study or work in the EU. The Union plays a very important role in diplomacy, democracy and the promotion of the same values, with a common goal. Together, we can achieve so much more.

Another achievement is the single market, which is the main driving force of the economy. It enables the free movement of goods, services or capital. The EU has become the world's largest trading bloc. When it comes to the international market, the EU is a key player and a reliable business partner in the global trade arena.

The EU, as an association of countries, offers political, economic and practical support to each of them, so that each of the 27 countries has the potential for significant development. In the Municipality of Andrychów itself, by the support of the Union, many investments have been made.

One of them was the expansion of the economic activity zone. The goal of this project was the preparation of investment areas enabling the construction of industrial and service facilities with access to technical infrastructure and transport of the city. Today, top companies have their headquarters here, such as Ogniochron – producing fire extinguishers for the international arena or CMC. More and more entrepreneurs want to invest in Andrychów and more plants are under construction. There is also a shopping mall with top store brands. The inhabitants of the Municipality benefited not only in terms of consumption, but also in terms of new job places.

By the subsidy from the European Union, many recreational and sports investments have been created in the Commune, such as the Flow Park in Sułkowice, the roller skating track in Zagórnik, or the latest investment opened last year, i.e. the Anteckii Pond with paths around Pańska Mountain. The goal was to encourage outdoor activity and provide a place to do so. It has also become a perfect place for the integration of residents during organized competitions of cycling, canoeing or running, as well as a place for school classes in the field of natural sciences, art and physical education. There is also a psychiatric hospital nearby, where patients can take outdoor activities.

The Union has also helped to create the Municipal Transport Network. The local public transport project allowed for the purchase of buses, the reconstruction of bus stop infrastructure and the adaptation of technical facilities. Residents can move safely and freely throughout the Commune.

Because the Union, students of our schools can take part in inter-school exchanges, learning about new cultures and traditions. Such projects give them the opportunity to explore a new world and open up to it, make many friends and gain unforgettable memories and experiences.

The EU also helps us support our environment and ecology, by co-financing a project to replace heat sources in individual households in the Andrychów Commune. The subject of the project/investment was the replacement of old solid fuel heating sources with new ones in the form of gas boilers and biomass boilers, heat pumps along with the execution of internal installations. As a result, many residents have replaced their heating furnaces, which has contributed, for example, to improving air quality.

The list of investments is endless, there are many new projects and ideas on how to improve our little homeland. There is only one conclusion – acting together, in concert, the EU countries have more clout and opportunities for development than each of them individually. Together we can do more.



POLAND



MUNICIPALITY OF  
ANDRYCHÓW

## THE EUROPEAN UNION IN MY DAILY LIFE – ACHIEVEMENTS – HOW I BENEFIT, HOW OTHERS BENEFIT, CHANGES I WITNESSED...



MALTA



HAL KIRKOP LOCAL COUNCIL

Living in the charming municipality of Kirkop, Malta, has been greatly influenced by the presence and achievements of the European Union (EU). In this article, we explore the tangible benefits and changes experienced by the residents of Kirkop due to EU initiatives. From improved infrastructure to increased cultural exchange, the EU has left an indelible mark on our daily lives.

Kirkop's streets bear witness to the positive transformations brought about by EU funding. Infrastructure projects, such as road improvements and modernization of public spaces, have enhanced our daily commute and overall living conditions, in particular with the recently finished multi-level intersection which was co-financed through the EU's Connection Europe Facility. The EU's commitment to regional development has played a crucial role in elevating Kirkop's status as a thriving community and connecting it further with the rest of the island.

Moreover, the EU has significantly contributed to the environmental well-being of Kirkop. Initiatives promoting sustainable practices, waste management systems, and renewable energy projects have not only beautified our surroundings but have also paved the way for a greener, healthier future. As residents, we directly benefit from these changes, experiencing a cleaner and more sustainable environment.

In terms of cultural enrichment, the EU's emphasis on cross-cultural collaboration has fostered a diverse and inclusive atmosphere in Kirkop. Cultural exchange programs and initiatives have enabled residents to engage with people from different EU member states, broadening our horizons and fostering a sense of unity, which is of great importance with the ongoing conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East. The rich tapestry of cultures within Kirkop is a testament to the EU's commitment to promoting diversity.

In conclusion, the EU has undeniably contributed to the betterment of Kirkop, Malta. The tangible improvements in infrastructure, environmental sustainability, and cultural diversity are evident in our daily lives, making us proud beneficiaries of the EU's achievements.



SWEDEN



Haninge  
kommun

The European Union (EU) has significantly influenced and shaped my life, playing a pivotal role in my personal and professional development, particularly within the realm of youth issues. The various programs and initiatives orchestrated by the EU have provided me with an invaluable platform to engage in projects and activities that have not only enriched my work but also broadened my knowledge in this critical field.

One of the standout aspects of EU membership that has greatly impacted my life is the extensive networking opportunities it offers. Through EU-sponsored events, conferences, and collaborative projects, I have had the chance to connect with like-minded individuals from diverse backgrounds. These networking opportunities have not only expanded my professional circle but have also exposed me to a wealth of perspectives and ideas. The connections forged through these initiatives have proven to be instrumental in my personal growth and have opened doors to new possibilities and collaborations.

Moreover, the EU's commitment to education and exchange has been a transformative force in my life. Participating in various exchange programs, courses, and events facilitated by the EU has allowed me to gain a multifaceted understanding of different cultures and viewpoints. These experiences have not only broadened my worldview but have also equipped me with a set of skills and knowledge that extends beyond the boundaries of traditional education. The emphasis on education and exchange within the EU has been instrumental in shaping my character and providing me with a unique set of tools to navigate an interconnected and globalized world.

The significance of the EU in my life is further underscored by its commitment to consumer and labor standards. As a member of the EU, I benefit from a robust framework of consumer protections that ensure product safety, fair trading practices, and data protection. These standards have instilled in me a sense of confidence and trust in the products and services I encounter, contributing to a safer and more secure consumer experience.

In conclusion, the European Union has been a driving force in my life, offering a platform for growth and development within the realm of youth issues. The networking opportunities, emphasis on education and exchange, and commitment to consumer and labor standards have collectively shaped my personal and professional journey. As I continue to navigate the intricate tapestry of life, I am grateful for the transformative impact that EU membership has had on me and the countless opportunities it has provided for self-discovery, learning, and meaningful connections.

## THE EU IN YOUR DAILY LIFE

One fundamental value that unites all EU countries is democracy. This means that only democratic countries can be members of the EU. Other values that are common to all EU countries are respect for human dignity, freedom, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of people belonging to minority groups



CZECH REPUBLIC



MESTO LANSKROUN

## HERE ARE 5 EXAMPLES OF HOW THE EU WORKS FOR YOU IN YOUR DAILY LIFE

1. You can travel, study, work and live in any EU country. Free movement of people is possible thanks to the EU's single market.
2. The EU has removed barriers to free trade between its members. This means that you can
3. produce, sell and buy goods wherever you want in the EU. It also means that consumers have a larger choice of products and lower prices. The Schengen Agreement has removed border controls between most EU countries. You can now cross most borders within the EU without showing your passport
4. The EU has removed barriers to free trade between its members. This means that you can produce, sell and buy goods wherever you want in the EU. It also means that consumers have a larger choice of products and lower prices.
5. When travelling in another EU country you might fall ill or have an accident. With the European Health Insurance Card you are entitled to any medical treatment that cannot wait until you get home. You will receive state-provided healthcare abroad and pay the same fees as locals.
6. Air travel has become much cheaper. The EU has broken up national monopolies and has permitted competition in the aviation sector. More cities now have their own airports and there are more direct flights between them. Passenger rights have also been strengthened.

THE EUROPEAN UNION HAS ACHIEVED A LOT SINCE ITS FOUNDING DAYS. IT HAS DELIVERED MORE THAN HALF A CENTURY OF PEACE, STABILITY AND PROSPERITY. IT HAS HELPED RAISE LIVING STANDARDS. AND IT HAS LAUNCHED THE WORLD'S LARGEST SINGLE MARKET AS WELL AS THE EURO.



## THE IMPACT OF THE EUROPEAN UNION ON PEOPLE'S EVERYDAY LIFE IN HUNGARY

Hungary joined the European Union on May 1, 2004 with great hopes. My personal experience is that after the system change in Hungary in the early 1990s, my class teacher at the time talked with great enthusiasm about our opportunities following our entry into the EU. Almost 14 years later, we joined. We noticed that on May 2, 2004, after all, nothing happened in our everyday life. I would also like to continue with a personal experience. In June 2004, I experienced the first impact of the Union on my daily life for the first time, because during a car trip in the Czech Republic, we had an accident in which, fortunately, we were not injured, and our car was damaged, and the insurance process was incredibly smooth. cross-border administration between insurance companies, because from June 2004, if I remember correctly, the systems of the insurance companies of the EU member states were connected.

From the point of view of Hungarian people, the entry into the Schengen area, which took place on November 15, 2007, was also a big step in their everyday life. A sad historical memory of Hungary, which is a painful memory for Hungarians to this day, despite the fact that generations have grown up, is the Trianon decision of June 4, 1920, when 2/3 of the Hungarian native-speaking population was trapped outside the Hungarian borders during World War I. regarding defeat. The descendants of these families have retained their Hungarian identity to this day, even though they were integrated as citizens of their new countries. From this point of view, it was important for the Hungarians that the members of families separated by the borders of the countries entered the Schengen area and it became easier to maintain contact.

Employment in Western Europe was also important for Eastern European countries in terms of stimulating the economy and in connection with the financial development of the families of these countries. At one time, they joked in Hungary that London was the 6th most populous Hungarian city, because so many foreign workers lived in London. Since then, the United Kingdom is no longer a member of the EU. Perhaps nowadays there is a tendency that employees who worked abroad are trying to move back to Hungarian enterprises.

As the "black sheep", Hungary's situation now goes against the main direction of the EU in many respects, but also because of the above, Hungary has no intention of living outside the EU, and ordinary people also experience the infrastructural and other developments that our country got this by joining the EU.



HUNGARY



TAR KOZSEG  
ONKORMANYZATA

## THE EUROPEAN UNION IN MY DAILY LIFE – ACHIEVEMENTS - HOW I BENEFIT, HOW OTHERS BENEFIT, CHANGES I WITNESSED

Eastern European countries, including Slovakia, joined the European Union on May 1, 2004 with great hope. Those of us who grew up in the Soviet-style "democracy" were already looking forward to the opening to the West, which opened up the entire Western civilized world to us. There were three important pillars of joining that radically changed our lives. First of all, there was the free flow of labour, which made possible for the workers, who often only worked for minimum wages here, excellent professionals, to get jobs for fair wages in the surrounding Western European countries, primarily in Austria and Germany, but also in the more distant England. The second major change in our lives was the opening of the Schengen borders in December 2007, when we could travel throughout the European Union without a passport, without anyone stopping us at the border. This was perhaps one of the most important results of joining the EU. The third important moment of our amalgamation to the EU was Slovakia's entry to the monetary union, when on January 1, 2009, the Slovak crown was replaced by the euro. In the former Eastern Bloc, apart from Slovakia, Slovenia and Croatia introduced this currency, the other member countries like Hungary, Romania, the Czech Republic and Poland, have yet to do so. Obviously, this is primarily an economic issue, since the introduction of the euro is a very serious financial and economic decision that has consequences. Since joining the European Union, we have been able to visit many countries of Europe, where we got to know other cultures, people, languages and customs, and we saw how diverse, modern, rich history and past Europe has. This was thanks to the tenders and grants provided by the EU, within the framework of which we made countless friendships. Thanks to European Union subsidies, Slovakia and the surrounding countries of the former Eastern Bloc have undergone enormous development. This is visible. New roads, bridges, utilities were built; historical monuments and buildings were renovated and built in each region of Slovakia. Joining the EU is, from our point of view, a very determining factor in our lives, and it is also one of the keys to development and common thinking in our future.



SLOVAKIA



OBEC GLABUSOVCE



ROMANIA



MUNICIPIUL TURNU MAGURELE

The European Union has emerged as a transformative force in my life, particularly as a woman living in a crossborder city. This project marks my inaugural participation in a European program that brings together individuals from 17 different nationalities, an experience that holds immense promise for personal and communal growth.

Living in a crossborder city as Turnu Magurele, the significance of the EU becomes abundantly clear. The prospect of Romania's inclusion in the Schengen space, as outlined in the new agreement, presents a host of opportunities for someone in my position. The removal of border controls and the seamless movement across borders will undoubtedly simplify my daily life, fostering a sense of unity and cooperation among neighboring nations. The Schengen expansion stands as a testament to the EU's commitment to enhancing the quality of life for its citizens, promoting ease of travel, and fortifying cross-cultural connections.

Participating in a European program that spans multiple nationalities is a unique and enriching experience. The EU's emphasis on unity in diversity is not just a slogan but a lived reality, fostering an environment where individuals from varied backgrounds converge to collaborate, share experiences, and build meaningful connections. This diverse community offers an incredible opportunity for me to broaden my horizons, gain insights into different cultures, and establish connections that extend beyond national borders.

One of the notable benefits I anticipate from my involvement in this European program is the networking opportunities it provides. Engaging with individuals from many nationalities not only widens my professional network but also opens doors to a wealth of knowledge and expertise. The collaborative projects and activities within the program create a fertile ground for cross-cultural understanding, enabling me to build relationships that transcend geographical boundaries. These connections, forged through the EU-sponsored initiative, hold the potential to be a source of support, inspiration, and collaboration in both my personal and professional life.

Furthermore, the EU's commitment to education and exchange is particularly relevant in my fifties. This program offers a unique chance to continue my learning journey, exposing me to new perspectives, ideas, and skills. The emphasis on lifelong learning within the EU aligns with my belief in the importance of ongoing personal and professional development, allowing me to stay relevant and engaged in a rapidly evolving world.

Finally, the European Union, with its innovative programs and the prospect of Romania joining the Schengen space, significantly impacts my life as a woman in her fifties residing in a crossborder city. The diverse, multinational environment of the European program promises invaluable networking opportunities, fostering connections that transcend national borders. The commitment to education and the facilitation of cross-border movement through Schengen inclusion further contribute to the enhancement of my personal and professional journey, affirming the EU's role as a catalyst for positive change in the lives of its citizens.

As European citizens, living in Portugal, we benefit from basic things that we often believe to be guaranteed, namely living in a peaceful region, being part of one of the largest economies in the world and having the freedom to live, study, work and travel to other countries. from the EU.

Access to the Structural (and Cohesion) Funds intended for the modernization of the economy made it possible to create several support programs: for accessibility, for agriculture, for industry, for professional training and for education. The application of these funds was most visible in the modernization of infrastructure, such as telecommunications, gas, electricity, water networks and also the road and railway networks, with emphasis on the construction of motorways and bridges.

In these 36 years, in general, Portugal has evolved a lot. If we remember what Portugal was like before joining the EU, we remember a country with a very high poverty rate, very low qualifications, including high illiteracy rates, and a small minority of young people accessing higher education.

A good bet for the EU was the Erasmus+ program, which allows students to be more successful in their personal and professional lives and helps universities to become more innovative. This program is open to young people, students, interns, teachers and people working in the field of education, as well as volunteers from around the world.

Traveling in Europe has also become much easier than it used to be because most EU countries, and some third countries, have abolished border controls between them through the Schengen Agreement.

Younger children also receive support through the European Child Guarantee, which is a program aimed at combating social exclusion and poverty through education, healthcare, nutrition and housing.

In conclusion, the EU contributed to improving the lives of the Portuguese people.



PORTUGAL



FREGUESIA DE BUARCOS  
E SAO JULIAO



The European Union has been a beacon of peace for the past 80 years. Since the end of World War II, there has been no war between countries of the European Union. This is a remarkable achievement, as it is the first time in history that such a long period of peace has been achieved in Europe. Prior to the formation of the EU, France was at war with many of its neighbours, including England, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, and Italy. Same for other EU countries. The EU has been successful in promoting peace by fostering cooperation and mutual understanding among its member states. The EU has also been instrumental in promoting friendly relations between European citizens by providing opportunities for them to meet and interact with one another.



FRANCE



**Mouvement  
Européen**  
*Gironde*

In addition to promoting peace, the EU has many other benefits. One of the most important is the exchange of culture. The EU has a rich cultural heritage, and it is committed to promoting this heritage both within Europe and around the world. The EU also promotes economic development by providing funding for infrastructure projects and other initiatives that help to create jobs and stimulate growth. Finally, the EU has created a common citizenship that allows citizens of member states to live and work anywhere within the EU. This has helped to promote greater mobility and has made it easier for people to travel and do business across borders.

The EU has been a tremendous success story. It has helped to promote peace, prosperity, and cooperation among its member states, and it has become a model for other regions of the world to follow. While there are certainly challenges that lie ahead, the EU remains committed to its core values of peace, cooperation, and mutual understanding



## THE EUROPEAN UNION IN MY DAILY LIFE

Traveling is an integral part of my daily life. The experience and emotions of getting to know new countries are difficult to describe in words and show in photos. Each person has to live this experience for themselves.

Since Latvia joined the European Union in 2004 and joined the Eurozone in 2014, traveling within Europe has become so easy. When driving a car, only road signs indicate the crossing of the national border. And when flying by plane, there are times when no one even checks identity documents.

Trip planning has also become easier - because, for the most part, you don't have to think about currency exchange, getting a visa and arranging other formalities. All that remains is to buy a ticket and go on a journey. You can indulge in spontaneity – breakfast in your kitchen and dinner on the other side of Europe. It is possible!

After joining the European Union, Latvians also have the opportunity to get an education and study in another European Union country, as well as to work in other member states. I took the opportunity to participate in projects funded by the European Union.

And although in other daily activities I do not feel additional pluses or minuses from the fact that Latvia is a member of the European Union, I subconsciously have a sense of security provided by the European Union.



LATVIA



Solis Tuvāk  
Biedrība



GERMANY

## THE EUROPEAN UNION IN MY DAILY LIFE – THE WAY I PROFIT AND OTHERS DO, CHANGES THAT I HAVE EXPERIENCED AND OBSERVED



Education and Mobility in Europe

Almost every day, decisions taken in shaping the EU have a greater or lesser impact on our daily life.

Be it planning a trip, the education of our children or grandchildren, daily politics or simple things such as shopping for daily needs.

Last year, my wife and I made a round trip through several EU-Countries by car. We met each other in Bordeaux.

It has become easy to pass the borders of our neighbouring countries, without long traffic jams and border controls, to pay with the same currency when traveling and to meet people without suspicion.

We were able to grow up in peace, wars were far away. But due to the conflicts around the Ukraine and Israel wars have come closer to the European Union.

I think at present it is most important for all of us to preserve peace by way of unity and to put aside smaller national interests. I support this with my daily work and in conversations, because I am more for dialogue instead of sending weapons.

I live in one of the central boroughs of Berlin, in Friedrichshain-Keuzberg. This district is considered a hotspot for young people from all over Europe. You can hear almost all European languages on the streets, shops, restaurants and in clubs. Young people from all over the EU live and work here.

I have been working for many years in a non-profit organization that organizes internships abroad for young trainees in Europe. They gain experiences in living together abroad, they get to know the working methods in their trades and professions in their neighbouring countries. This way they reduce their fears, create tolerance and understanding, they understand each other better.

The "Erasmus plus" programme is one of the best results of the EU's work benefits everyone.

However, things have become restless in Europe. Migration and wars cause problems. National interests, different interpretations and also wrong decisions put cohesion in the EU to the test.

I personally am convinced of the concept of a European Union even though I know that this can only work out by way of dialogue, respect for each other, mutual understanding and that all of this takes time.

Let's contribute to this with our meeting.

Liebe Freunde,

wie beeinflusst die Europäische Union mein tägliches Leben?

Fast täglich haben Entscheidungen, die im Rahmen der Gestaltung der EU gefallen sind oder gefällt werden, mehr oder weniger Einfluss auf unser tägliches Leben.

Bei der Planung einer Reise, bei der Ausbildung unserer Kinder oder Enkelkinder, in der Tagespolitik oder so Banales wie der Einkauf des täglichen Bedarfs.

Im letzten Jahr habe ich mit meiner Frau eine kleine Rundreise mit dem Auto durch mehrere Länder der EU gemacht, wir haben uns gemeinsam in Bordeaux getroffen.

Es ist für uns einfach geworden die Grenzen unserer Nachbarn ohne lange Kontrollen und Staus zu passieren, auf Reisen mit einer gemeinsamen Währung zu bezahlen und Menschen ohne Misstrauen zu begegnen.

Wir konnten in Frieden aufwachsen, Kriege waren für uns weit entfernt. Doch durch die Konflikte um die Ukraine und Israel ist der Krieg wieder nahe an die EU herangerückt.

Ich glaube, dass es gegenwärtig die wichtigste Aufgabe für uns alle ist, den Frieden durch Einigkeit zu erhalten und kleinere, nationale Interessen zurückzustellen. Ich unterstütze dies durch meine Arbeit und in Gesprächen, weil ich für mehr Dialog statt Waffenlieferungen bin.

Ich lebe in einem der zentralen Stadtbezirke Berlins, in Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg. Er gilt gegenwärtig als ein Hotspot des Jugend Europas, man hört auf den Straßen, Plätzen und Clubs fast alle europäischen Sprachen, hier arbeiten und wohnen junge Menschen aus ganz Europa.

Ich arbeite seit vielen Jahren in einem gemeinnützigen Verein, der für junge Auszubildenden Auslandspraktika in Europa organisiert. Sie sammeln Erfahrungen im Zusammenleben in Ausland, lernen die Arbeitsweise in ihren Berufen und Traditionen in unseren Nachbarländern kennen. Dabei werden Ängste abgebaut, Toleranz und Verständnis erzeugt, man versteht einander besser.

Das Erasmus+ Programm ist eines der besten Ergebnisse der Arbeit der EU von dem alle profitieren.

Es ist unruhig geworden in Europa. Migration und Kriege schaffen Probleme in der EU, nationale Interessen und unterschiedliche Bewertungen, aber auch politische Fehlentscheidungen stellen den Zusammenhalt der Union auf die Probe.

Ich persönlich bin von dem Konzept einer Europäischen Union überzeugt, auch wenn ich weiß, dass dies nur mit Dialog, gegenseitiger Achtung und dem Verständnis aller Partner für einander, gelingen kann und Zeit braucht.

Tragen wir mit unseren Treffen auch weiterhin bei.

## KAUNO SUAUGUSIŲJŲ IR JAUNIMO MOKYMO CENTRAS, LITHUANIA



LITHUANIA



KSJMC

KAUNO SUAUGUSIŲJŲ IR  
JAUNIMO MOKYMO CENTRAS

Ten points on how the EU impacts my life

1. Free movement of people. Lithuanian citizens have the freedom to fly whenever and wherever they want within the European Union. It is essential for cultural, economic, social, and other exchanges.
2. Paying taxes only when doing business in one country. Therefore, for example, when I sell a work of art to a buyer in another country, I do not have to pay double taxes.
3. Cultural unification is growing stronger. We create cultural products and invite artists from the EU to visit us. We feel that we are similar; we are like a cultural medium with a chance to know each other.
4. Food product standards. If you buy your favourite coffee in Lithuania, you can expect the same coffee in Germany to taste the same.
5. The EU legal framework strongly affects Lithuanian law. The law is becoming more humane, advisory rather than punishable. For example, the tax inspectorate advises residents first, rather than punishing them.
6. EU nature protection requirements have improved the situation in Lithuania. In particular, the water quality is improving.
7. European projects have a significant impact on the economy in the state and municipalities. Projects partially financed by the EU help local businesses to increase investment, expand and change the range of goods and services.
8. As a single economic space, the EU helps local entrepreneurs to find new markets and sales channels that have not previously been available or difficult to access.
9. The European Union informs citizens of current issues in the EU through communication channels, such as Euronews, and we do not live at municipal or state level.
10. The EU is influencing our cultural mindset. We are watching more European theatres, dances, and films, as well as organising international festivals. It is important to reduce Hollywood and Russian production.



## WHAT THE EU IS DOING IN THE KEMPEN REGION AND THE CITY OF HOOGSTRATEN



BELGIUM

Asturia vzw

ASTURIA

Hoogstraten is the northernmost city in Belgium. This city has many rural areas and nature plays an important role in this region. That is why residents are very interested in the European Green Deal

The European Green Deal sets out how we can make Europe the first climate-neutral continent by 2050. To achieve this goal, we must work towards a clean, circular economy, restore biodiversity and reduce pollution. All sectors must participate in this, and that means, for example:

- investing in environmentally friendly technology
- help companies innovate
- provide cleaner, cheaper and healthier private and public transport
- decarbonize the energy sector
- ensure greater energy efficiency of buildings
- work with international partners to improve global environmental standards.

The EU wants to be climate neutral by 2050 and wants to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% below 1990 levels by 2030. The very first European climate law will put these goals in black and white and ensure that the EU contributes to them in all policy areas.

This requires significant investments from both the EU and governments in the Member States, but also from the private sector. With the European Green Deal investment plan, the EU is allocating at least EUR 1 trillion for sustainable investments, and with the Just Transition Mechanism, it is not leaving any region behind; at least €55 billion will be spent on targeted measures in the most affected regions. The climate is addressed in all major EU funding programmes; at least 30% of the 2021–2027 budget will go to climate measures.

Underpinning the European Green Deal is the ambition to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by transforming our food systems, our use of forests, land, water and sea, and our energy sector, cities and industry. The EU's new industrial strategy will help European industry lead the twin transitions towards climate neutrality and digital leadership. Digital technology will also play an important role in the EU's 2050 climate target, for example to optimize energy consumption in agriculture, transport, manufacturing and many other sectors.

Climate change and biodiversity loss are threats to the entire planet, and the EU will continue to lead international efforts for ambitious environmental, climate and energy policies worldwide.

## THE IMPACT OF THE EU IN YOUR DAILY LIFE

The European Union (EU) is an integral part of our daily life, influencing various aspects from economic activities to social policies and beyond. Its impact is pervasive and multifaceted, touching upon numerous facets of my routine.

One significant aspect is economic integration facilitated by the EU's single market.

As a consumer, we benefit from a wide range of products and services from across member states, enjoying greater choice and competitive prices. The removal of trade barriers within the EU has facilitated seamless cross-border transactions, making it easier to purchase goods and services from different countries. This has enriched our daily life by providing access to diverse cultural products, culinary experiences, and technological innovations.

Moreover, the EU's emphasis on environmental sustainability and consumer protection has a direct impact on our daily choices. Environmental regulations and initiatives aimed at reducing carbon emissions, promoting renewable energy, and improving air and water quality contribute to a healthier and more sustainable living environment.

Similarly, consumer protection laws ensure the safety and quality of products available in the market, enhancing my confidence as a consumer.

The EU also plays a crucial role in safeguarding fundamental rights and promoting social justice. Through initiatives such as the European Social Fund and programs supporting education, employment, and social inclusion, the EU contributes to fostering a more inclusive society. As a result, we benefit from opportunities for education and training, employment mobility, and access to healthcare services across member states.

Furthermore, the EU's commitment to fostering peace, stability, and cooperation among member states has broader implications for our daily life. The absence of trade barriers and the promotion of diplomatic dialogue reduce the likelihood of conflicts, contributing to a more secure and stable environment in which to live and work.

The EU's impact on our daily life is profound and multifaceted, encompassing economic, social, environmental, and political dimensions. Its influence is felt in various aspects of our routine, from the products we consume to the rights we enjoy and the opportunities available to us. As a member of the EU community, we are part of a collective endeavor to build a more prosperous, sustainable, and inclusive future.



ITALY



ASSOCIAZIONE  
CIRCUM VITAE



GREECE



KENTRO EKPEDEFSIS KE  
APOKATASTASISTIFLON (C.E.R.B.)

## AIMS AND VALUES IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

The aims of the European Union within its borders are:

- promote peace, its values and the well-being of its citizens
- offer freedom, security and justice without internal borders, while also taking appropriate measures at its external borders to regulate asylum and immigration and prevent and combat crime
- establish an internal market
- achieve sustainable development based on balanced economic growth and price stability and a highly competitive market economy with full employment and social progress
- protect and improve the quality of the environment
- promote scientific and technological progress
- combat social exclusion and discrimination
- promote social justice and protection, equality between women and men, and protection of the rights of the child
- enhance economic, social and territorial cohesion and solidarity among EU countries
- respect its rich cultural and linguistic diversity
- establish an economic and monetary union whose currency is the euro

The European Union is founded on the following values:

### **Human dignity**

Human dignity is inviolable. It must be respected, protected and constitutes the real basis of fundamental rights.

### **Freedom**

Freedom of movement gives citizens the right to move and reside freely within the Union. Individual freedoms such as respect for private life, freedom of thought, religion, assembly, expression and information are protected by the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

### **Democracy**

The functioning of the EU is founded on representative democracy. A European citizen automatically enjoys political rights. Every adult EU citizen has the right to stand as a candidate and to vote in elections to the European Parliament. EU citizens have the right to stand as a candidate and to vote in their country of residence, or in their country of origin.

### **Equality**

Equality is about equal rights for all citizens before the law. The principle of equality between women and men underpins all European policies and is the basis for European integration. It applies in all areas. The principle of equal pay for equal work became part of the Treaty of Rome in 1957.

### **Rule of law**

The EU is based on the rule of law. Everything the EU does is founded on treaties, voluntarily and democratically agreed by its EU countries. Law and justice are upheld by an independent judiciary. The EU countries gave final jurisdiction to the European Court of Justice - its judgments have to be respected by all.

### **Human rights**

Human rights are protected by the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. These cover the right to be free from discrimination on the basis of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, the right to the protection of your personal data, and the right to get access to justice.

# PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES



MUNICIPALITY OF PADRÓN  
(SPAIN)



Funded by the  
European Union



GMINA ANDRYCHÓW URZĄD  
MIEJSKI W ANDRYCHOWIE

