

PROJECT'S RESULTS

The Project “BRIDGE – Building Relationships Into a Democratic Goal for Europe” was promoted in 2019 by the Municipality of Vila Nova de Cerveira, Portugal.

The main purpose of the Project was to involve pairs of neighboring European Organizations that are located on the border of two adjoining Countries.

In fact, it involved 11 Partners coming from 10 Countries. The partnership was composed by 5 pairs of bordering Countries, namely: Portugal/Spain (Vila Nova de Cerveira/Tomiño), Hungary/Slovakia (Borsod-abaúj-zemplén county government/Rozsnyó város), Latvia/Lithuania (Daugavpils/Panevėžys), Bulgaria/Serbia (Sdruženie na Yugozapadnite Obshtini/Dimitrovgrad), Slovenia (GECT GO) plus one partner from Cyprus (Deryneia) and one partner from Italy (Lighthouse Languages).

The mentioned Organizations jointly chose to start the BRIDGE project with the same willingness to promote cross-border citizenship and social cohesion beyond borders. Besides this main objective, the Project chose also to focus on the analysis of two of the main phenomena that affect UE: Euroscepticism and Xenophobia. Since these problems can be found in most European Countries, the partners considered it appropriate to talk about them and to share potential solutions and best practices. In fact, the participants focused on the different internal ways to cope with these two phenomena: analysis of the causes that lead to these problems, how to deal with them, what solutions to be carried out, the expected solutions to ensure that EU transboundary regions can by its own means enhance European citizenship, etc. It turned out to be important to talk about these problems and to gather data, in order to have a full vision of the reality and to try to state a list of expectations for the Europe 2030 Programme.

All the debates and discussions were carried out in a cooperative mood since one of the objectives was to strengthen solidarity feeling among European Members and among adjoining Countries and to avoid a lack of solidarity among citizens.

According to the initial proposal, the Project should have had a duration of 24 months, but it was extended to 36 months because of the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak.

In order to reach the expected objectives, BRIDGE foresaw the implementation of five International events, each one focused on a specific theme, namely:

1st International meeting on the border between Portugal and Spain (Vila Nova de Cerveira and Tomiño) in October 2021, focused on “The Perception Of The European Union During The Crisis Due To Covid-19 Pandemic”;



2nd International Meeting on the border between Hungary and Slovakia (Miskolc and Roznava), in March 2022, focused on “Evolution of cross-border relations: how the relations between cross-border countries changed in the last few years, sharing of good practices”



3rd International Meeting on the border between Italy and Slovenia (Gorizia and Nova Gorica), in May 2022, focused on “Cross-border cultural events/projects already done and projects that are not yet cross-border but could become”;



4th International Meeting on the border between Bulgaria and Serbia (Slivnitsa and Dimitrovgrad), in June 2022, focused on “Successful projects in the sphere of social, cultural, ecological and civil activities”;



5th International Meeting on the border between Lithuania and Latvia (Panevėžys and Daugavpils), in September 2022, focused on “Legal difficulties in cross-border cooperation - how the national law can slow down some processes between neighboring Countries”.



These five events helped the partnership to reach the expected objectives, in particular, to strengthen the cooperation between cross-bordering Countries and to understand the differences and the difficulties of each one of these involved Organizations.

Although the project has ended, the will to continue the work already carried out was expressed by all partner entities, striving to ensure more cohesive cross-border regions with the European Union. It should be noted that networking in cross-border regions undoubtedly contributes to raising awareness of the memory, history, and common values of the Union and the Union's purpose.