

EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

PROJECT	
Participant:	[3] – ILEWASI
PIC number:	[932868401]
Project name and acronym:	[Defending Empowered Media, Openly Cultivating Resilience and Creating YouthWise Inclusive Social Engagement] — [DEMOCRACYWISE]

EVENT DESCRIPTION	
Event number:	[3]
Event name:	[International Workshop on Effective Participation]
Type:	[International Event]
In situ/online:	<i>[in-situ]</i>
Location:	[Castellon de la Plana], [Spain]
Date(s):	From 24/03/2025 to 27/03/2025
Website(s) (if any):	https://democracywiseciv.wordpress.com/international-workshop-on-effective-participation/
Participants	
Female:	49
Male:	30
Non-binary:	0
From country 1 [Spain]:	55
From country 2 [Cyprus]:	2
From country 3 [Italy]:	5
From country 4 [Poland]:	4
From country 5 [Portugal]:	4
From country 6 [Ireland]:	5
From country 7 [Hungary]:	4
Total number of participants:	79
From total number of countries:	7
Description	
<i>Provide a short description of the event and its activities.</i>	

DAY 1:

Arrival of the delegations, meeting at Xativa Metro Station in Valencia. Walking tour of Valencia pedestrian area. Train to Castellon de la Plana and meeting with ILEWASI volunteers and agenda presentation. Integrational dinner.

DAY 2:

Morning Session (10:00-14:00): International Workshop on Effective Participation at Menador espai cultural

Presentations and Discussions:

-Best practices for citizens engagement and effective participation: sharing of practice and case studies on citizens' engagement and participation. The session resulted in a proficous exchange of multilevel practices, starting from the bottom level of grassroots organizations like Varkapitany, to structured actions connected with EU participation actions like the Conference on the Future of Europe, as shared by APPIS. The Spanish host brought a case study regarding citizens' activation on the aftermath of the Dana floods in Valencia, showing how citizens coming together can fill the gaps left by the institutional level and advocate for a faster intervention at regional and national level.

-Interactive presentation on "Citizens' Participation: understanding, promoting and facilitating participation": the presentation introduced the Mentimeter tool, that can be used to facilitate direct engagement of participants in community driven meetings or to gather feedback and evaluations. The presentations aimed at training on the values and methodologies of citizens' participation, at local, national and EU level, to rise awareness on the existing spaces for citizens to intervene in the political debate and to stimulate interest in participation.

-Presentation of non-formal activities to be used at local level to stimulate communities to engage in reflection on the democratic process and to stimulate active participation:

1. Democracy Dilemmas: What Would You Do?
2. Living Library: The Activist's Path
3. The Power of Fake News: Dissecting Your Own Media Bias
4. Escape room: The Democracy Crisis Simulation

Those activities have been presented and partially tested, a reflection followed to debate feasibility and adaptation to a younger or elder target.

Afternoon: 14:00-19:00 La Mascletà – joining the community of Castellon de la Plana for one of the most typical event of the year. Participation in a community Paella competition together with local Colla groups (associations of citizens)

Outcomes:

- Introduce the role of Facilitators through a joint training session
- Give a common definition of citizens' participation and a review of the existing methods
- Reflection on the barriers that prevent citizens' direct participation
- Share best practices, active confrontation and cross-fertilization on ideas
- Directly engage participants in the reflection and activities
- Introduce tools to engage communities in non-formal activities about participation
- Joint reflection and evaluation of tools and adaptability to the different consortium level of action.

DAY 3**Morning and Afternoon session**

The second part of the workshop has been dedicated to the introduction of participatory initiatives at European Level, with exercitations:

- Have your say: EU public consultations – presentation about the European Commission's website for public consultations and feedback, overview of the submission procedure and review of open and closed consultations. Q&A and debate.

-European Citizens' Initiative: presentation of a direct democracy tool, overview of the functioning and requirements, review of existing proposals and of successful stories. Group work: drafting an European Citizens' Initiative.

Outcome:

- Transfer the participatory level from the community to the European Union
- Promote EU tools for participation in the democratic debate and policy-making
- Introduction of the topic of direct democracy
- Group work for direct engagement of participants
- Promoting knowledge on the European Institutions' official website

DAY 4

Operative meeting for evaluation, reporting and dissemination.

Departure of delegations.

The Kick-off meeting achieved the following results:

- It involved 78 direct participants, at intergenerational level, from 7 EU countries.
- Established a cooperative environment, allowing participants from different EU countries to meet and work together.
- Created a group of citizens in each involved organization that can act as facilitators for citizens engagement and participation promotion in their communities.
- Carried out a cross-sectorial and multilevel best practices exchange to allow the circulation of methodologies for citizens' participation and discuss their adaptability in different context.
- Implemented a training for facilitators about modalities of citizens participation, different levels of engagement, practices and methodologies.
- Promoted existing tool for direct participation in the EU policy-making process.
- Selection and experimentation of tools to foster and promote citizens' participation, engage local communities, promote a positive/real perception of the democratic debate at local, national and EU level.
- Actively foster tools of resilience for communities against the crises, real or perceived, and create an informed citizenry to contrast populism, propaganda and external interference.
- To favour the dissemination of the project, thanks to the active participation of delegates in a local city festival.

Feedback:

- the use of interactive presentations and feedback gathering tools has been much appreciate by all participants has it allowed them to avoid passive listening during the presentation part.
- the exchange of best practices turned out as a favourable moment of confrontation between organizations coming from different level of actions (from grassroots to regional organizations), with a positive debate arisen from the presentations.
- young participants were particularly attracted by non-formal methodology, finding them most-effective in stimulating the transmission of knowledge and methodologies.
- adult participants found the mixed methodology adapt to lead them in the use of non-formal tools and online participatory tools (mentimeter).
- informal, community-oriented events like the Magdalena Festival were effective in breaking down barriers and creating a welcoming environment. It allowed moments of exchange with the local and opportunities to rise awareness on the Democracywise project, its objective, and the fund granted by the CERV programme.
- the operational meeting evaluated the workshop positively and invited for a deeper integration of non-formal activities.

In addition, the logistic of the event foresaw the use of metro and trains for transfers from and to the airport (Valencia Airport); the delegations have been hosted in the Centre of Castellon de la Plana, allowing the organization to avoid the use of transportation.

This resulted in a more sustainable management of the group of participants.

Target groups:

- participants have been engaged inside and outside the consortium, allowing the local community to take part in project's activities.
- organizations part of the consortium participated with their own delegations, composed by a minimum of 4 to up to 12 participants, of these max 2 people were directly representing the project staff, while the other were citizens of the local community or affiliates (non operative workers) of the organization.
- the delegations were made up of mixed participants, assuring the presence both of youth and senior citizens and gender representation.
- the local community, stakeholders and public authorities in Castellon de la Plana have been involved through the participation of the delegation and Magdalena Festival events, that led to a meeting with the Mayor Begona Carrasco Garcia.
- citizens have been informed and engaged through posts on social networks, posters and flyers, and word of mouth.

Presentations, photogallery and contents of activities are available at this link:
<https://democracywiseciv.wordpress.com/2025/03/28/international-workshop-on-effective-participation-democracywise-in-castellon-de-la-plana/>



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