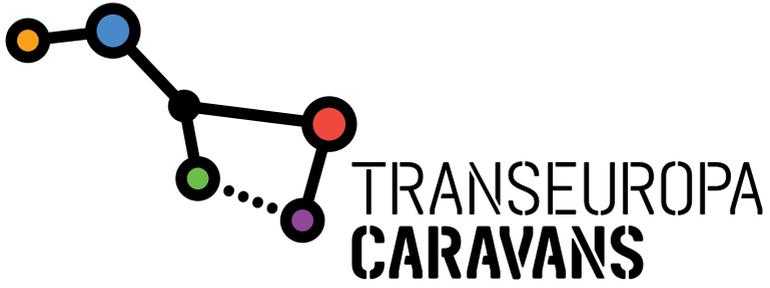
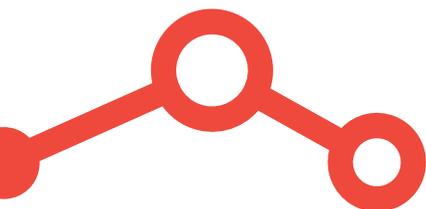


THE ROADS
TO EUROPEAN
DEMOCRACY
**TRANSEUROPA
CARAVANS**

Best practices and recommendations



**EUROPEAN
ALTERNATIVES**



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INTRODUCTION: MEET THE TRANSEUROPA CARAVANS 2019

Freedom of movement is one of the key rights of EU citizens. The population of mobile EU citizens has recently doubled, with around 17 million citizens of voting age in 2019, but the levels of voter registration for mobile EU citizens in municipal and European elections remains low. Certainly reforms are necessary since only some 8% of EU mobile citizens on average registered to vote in their country of residence. The low turnout for mobile citizens is worrying, as there is a real danger they do not exercise their electoral rights, thus being excluded from any democratic participation. As EU mobile citizens face problems in getting information and access to their free movement rights, including their electoral and political rights, they increasingly may feel they are losing control over the decisions that affect their lives, both at the local and at the European level.

With this in mind, ahead of the 2019 European Parliament elections, a group of young activists of Transeuropa Caravans was trained as peer leaders on EU rights and responsibilities for mobile citizens across Europe. Transeuropa Caravans reached personally over 5000 people in almost 80 locations - 38 cities in 15 European countries. They travelled to meet European citizens, inform them directly, connect their stories and their struggles, and mobilize together to promote electoral rights and participation of EU mobile citizens throughout Europe. **Together they tell us a story which shows that inclusive Europe is possible when civil society, local authorities and the EU institutions join their forces together.**

«If Europe is a continent of diversity, it is also one of contrasts within and between countries, but everywhere there are creative local projects. Despite a hostile climate and a shrinking civil society space, active European citizens have decided to connect with local initiatives and authorities to find new solutions. They are not alone and can be better connected across Europe».

Marta Cillero, European Alternatives

Transeuropa Caravans are meant to train and inspire EU mobile citizens throughout Europe to become more active in the democratic life of their place of residence. At each of the stops the Caravan teams engaged with the local people on the theme of European rights and free movement with a number of engaging techniques to attract citizens' attention. Their activities and trainings included: workshops, spontaneous public happenings, discovery and connection of local projects, interviews, group discussions and participation in demonstrations and large-scale events. **The aim of all these efforts was to foster political participation of EU mobile citizens and enhance capacity and knowledge of civil servants, activists and citizens on EU citizenship and related political rights.** Before the Caravans set off, its activists, trainers and supporters discussed how to approach the local actors of 15 countries they were to visit. We knew that the positive narrative of Europe can sometimes be understood as EU-centric, or simply not related to local needs. The key was to understand how to connect with the local public, from metropolis in Spain to small villages in Finland.



«Speaking from the point of view of a journalist, the media tends to report always on the bad news, the bad news is more newsworthy than good news. In that sense, you could argue that this project is probably too much of a “good news” story to report».

Irene, Central Caravan

«Before the Caravan set off, we wondered: how can we bring urgency to political culture, in which the general mood seems to be that of prosperity?»

Ninnu, Baltic team

In this publication, we are highlighting a **range of best practices** - local or regional initiatives that the Transeuropa Caravans approached and explored in person. We believe that these stories, together with **the recommendations** we give, can inspire people and policy makers in all EU countries - particularly with regard to freedom of movement, migration across Europe and voting rights.



Who is this publication for?

The publication has been created for **local authorities all over Europe, as well as activists, NGOs, and changemakers** who would like to become inspired by the good practices we collected in 15 countries, and which we found worth spreading in the light of the following targets:

— engage with citizens about their rights to freedom of movement and the importance of voting in the European elections;

— learn from and highlight local initiatives and struggles defending European rights and values which are effectively combating racism or extreme nationalism and striving for a more democratic open Europe;

— in support of these aims, assess needs for follow-up action and European networking in areas such as communicating Europe, migration and participatory democracy.



The routes

The core of the project consists of a group of activists and trainers travelling through fifteen European countries on five different routes.

Transeuropa Caravans Spring routes in May 2019:

📍 The Central and Eastern route

Germany, Austria, Hungary, Slovakia

Civic spaces under pressure

📍 The Western route

France, Spain, Portugal

Cities of Solidarity

📍 The Visegrad route

Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia

Culture and Theatre

📍 The Baltic route

Sweden, Finland and Estonia

Sustainability and Climate Change

The Transeuropa Caravans Autumn route in October and November 2019:

📍 The Mediterranean route

Italy, Slovenia, Croatia

Migration and borders, on the way to the Transeuropa Festival in Palermo





The Central and Eastern route

Civic spaces under pressure

Berlin > Dresden > Bautzen > Hoyerswerda >
Munich > Friedrichshafen > Lustenau >
Salzburg > Vienna > Bratislava > Budapest

The Western route

Cities of Solidarity

Lisbon > Porto > Viana do Castelo > A Coruña >
Zaragoza > Barcelona > Marseille > Saillans >
Lyon > Saint-Denis > Sarcelles > Paris

The Visegrad route

Culture and Theatre

Warsaw > Wałbrzych >
Mlada Boleslav > Prague > Bratislava >
Nitra > Warsaw

The Baltic route

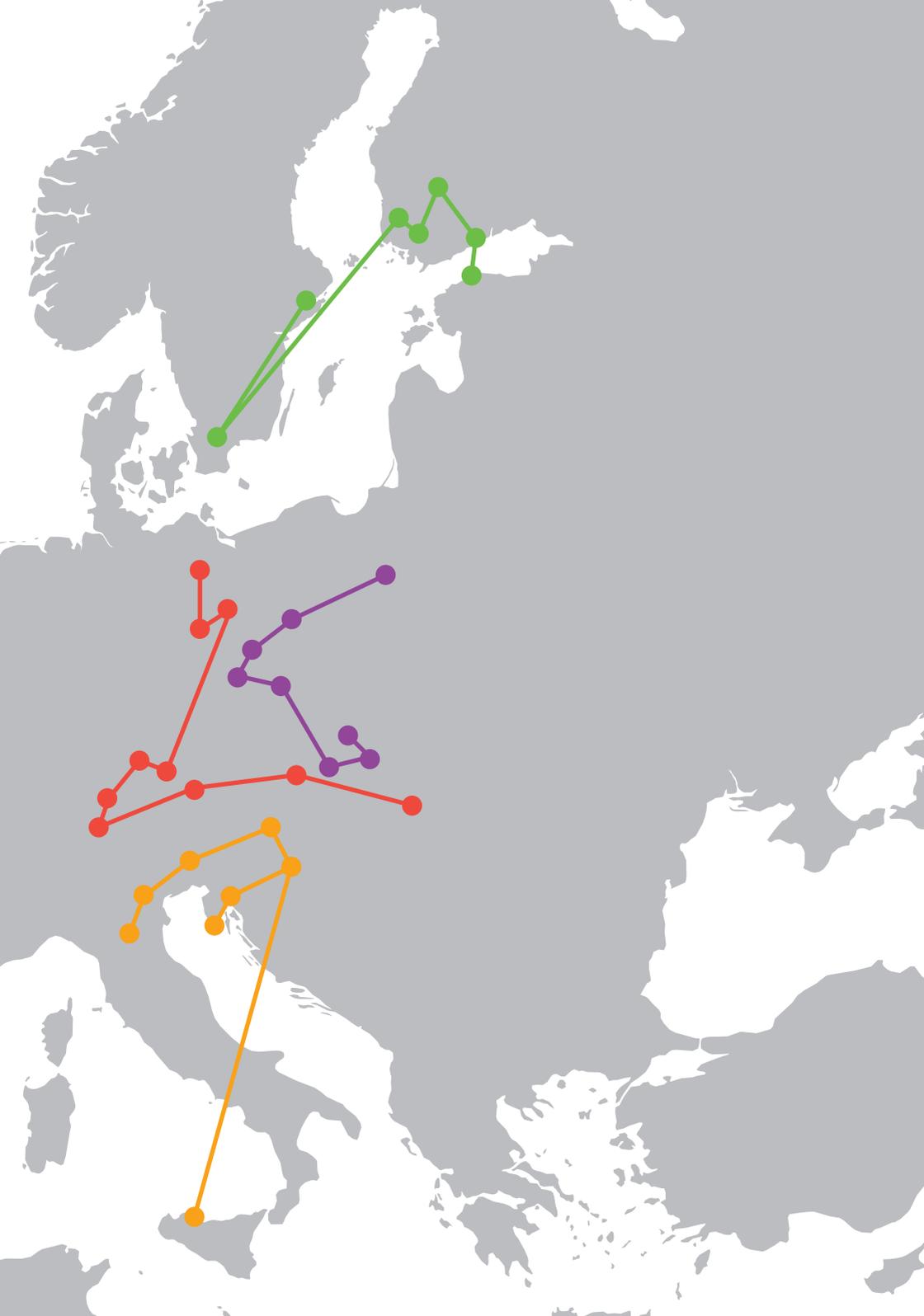
Sustainability and Climate Change

Stockholm > Hässleholm >
Mynämäki > Turku > Tampere >
Helsinki > Tallinn

The Mediterranean route

Migration and borders

Trieste > Pula > Rijeka > Zagreb > Ptuj >
Maribor > Udine > Padova > Bologna >
Faenza > Palermo



Trainers and activists



Central route

—



Katarzyna Deka, coordinator



Lia Hamminga, logistics coordinator



Georg Blokus, facilitator



Irene Dominioni,
communications officer



Antje Scharenberg, support & researcher

Western route



Doina Elena Craciun, coordinator



Emma Esini, logistics coordinator



Claraluz Lannes Keiser, facilitator



Adriana Díaz Martín-Zamorano,
communications officer

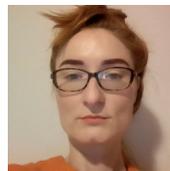
Visegrad route



Alicja Borkowska, coordinator



Justyna Chmielewska, logistic coordinator



Magdalena Roszkowska, facilitator & performer



Łukasz Wójcicki,
communications officer & performer

Baltic route



Maria Pia Sternativo, coordinator



Luca Michele Piscitelli, logistics coordinator



Paolo Pizzolo, facilitator & evaluator



Marie Rosenkranz, facilitator



Ninnu Erkkilä, communications officer



Tony Venables, European citizenship trainer

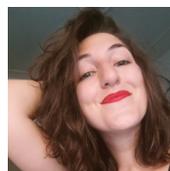
Mediterranean route



Maria Laura Mitra, coordinator



Chiara Organtini, support coordinator



Elena D'Amato, logistics coordinator



Alice Priori, facilitator



Irene Beltrame, communications officer



Jelena Batelić, trainer & facilitator

Trainers and coordinators



Gosia Wochońska - European Alternatives,
quality monitoring, coordination



Alexandra Zhumanalieva,
production coordinator



Marta Cillero - European Alternatives,
press and communication



Petar Marković - ECIT Foundation,
EU mobile citizens expert, ECI expert



Hana Grgić - European Alternatives,
press and communication



Tony Venables - ECIT Foundation,
European citizenship, evaluation



Ana Oppenheim - European Alternatives,
social media coordinator



Igor Stokfiszewski - Krytyka Polityczna,
digital story telling



Federica Baiocchi, financial director

BEST PRACTICES FROM THE CARAVANS ROUTES

Here we make a preliminary selection of best practices according to the **three components common to any citizenship including European citizenship: rights, participation and belonging.**

A word should be said about the hazards of selection since the contexts are so different both within and across European countries. What a place-based project such as this one reveals is not so much a Europe of diversity as one of contrasts. The contrasts are intensified by the rise of extreme right wing nationalism, shrinking civil society space and divergent attitudes to migration across Europe. The Transeuropa Caravans discovered for example ANVITA (Association nationa-

le des villes et territoires accueillants) in France, which deserves support and could be a venture for a more welcoming Europe. Some towns can be very supportive of freedom of movement, migrants in general and democratic participation, working closely with civil society organisations. In other places - often next door or just over the border - civil society organisations create their own space for freedom and democratic participation in opposition to the powers that be. Transeuropa Caravans offers hope for the future because regardless of often contrasting political and administrative environments, the language and culture of civil society organisations is similar and in principle their best practices can be replicated and exported.

2.1. RIGHTS— AND IN PARTICULAR EUROPEAN RIGHTS TO FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

An important takeaway from this project is that thanks to the Visegrad route it was possible to shed light on Eastern to Central European migration and freedom of movement, often neglected in studies and debates about free movement of workers. EU policy making has tended to focus on intra-EU migration flows from East to West, following the 2004 enlargement, or from South to North, triggered by the financial crisis of 2008. For those who want to find out more, our team discovered a special web portal devoted to migration in Central-Eastern Europe (migrationonline.cz).

There is not enough space here to evaluate all the findings in the Czech Republic and Slovakia or along the Polish-Ukrainian border but some implications for European policy do stand out. It should not be taken for granted that migration and freedom of movement are easily accepted in border regions between former enemies, especially when local people are not informed about migration caused by rapid industrialisation, industrial collapse and re-investment. Part of the problem is that the most difficult areas also appear to be virtual advice deserts, not only remote from EU sources of information but also from the provision of any services by local authorities to welcome newcomers. Freedom of movement was the theme common to all the Caravan routes, with the teams passing on the lessons learned from the training sessions and collecting signatures for a petition to the European Parliament on “genuine freedom of movement and a European citizenship for all”.

Find Transeuropa Caravans Petition and Manifesto here: transeuropacaravans.eu/materials/



Best practices

Centrum pro Integraci, Mlada Boleslav, CZECH REPUBLIC

It is a branch of an organisation with headquarters in Prague. It caters to some 15,000 migrant workers and is an example of a more developed service. The centre provides Czech language courses, social counselling and runs a regular job club. A three-year grant from the EU in 2018 has enabled the centre to widen its offer of support to tackle problems with employment, working conditions, housing, social security, insurance and family status. The centre operates without discriminating between legal and irregular migrants or between EU and non-EU migrants.

Skoda management and unions, Mlada Boleslav, CZECH REPUBLIC

It is unusual for a civil society organisation to nominate a company as a best practice, but Skoda, visited by the Visegrad Caravan team, stands out from other companies and in particular agencies in the region as an employer which treats its workers properly. Arek has been a Skoda worker for 12 years and has seen the improvements: “workers employed by the agencies and not directly by the company still wear blue uniforms but their rights are almost equal to those of workers wearing white uniforms who are employed directly by Skoda”. The equalisation of rights has been largely due to a company respectful of workers’ rights and strong trade unions (Covo pobory) who work on behalf of migrant agency workers. Mention should be made here of C.O.Z.Z, the centre for the organisation of Trade Unions in the Czech Republic.

It should be noted that if Skoda stands out there are also examples of worst practices by agencies and some employers, cases in which there is little support for migrant workers in the community, which leaves them particularly vulnerable to exploitation because they are dependent on information and advice provided only by one source at their place of work.

«Our mayor does not present a positive and open attitude towards migrants. Unfortunately some of our citizens are influenced by his propaganda. We are trying to change this by organising events for migrants and Czech people».

A representative of the Mlada Boleslav centre

Polish Orthodox Church, Walbrzych, POLAND

The church community consists mainly of people of Polish and Ukrainian origin and is very important in bringing the two together in an area where apparently you can still lose your job because of what your grandparents’ generation did during the war. As there are no NGO’s or support for migrants organised by the municipality, the church community is the one that collects money for language courses and creates a network of people willing and able to help newcomers organise their stay and become familiar with legal processes. The priest in charge is planning to set up an NGO to act in a more formalised way to improve the situation of Ukrainians throughout Southern Poland. This example has been selected because where there is a lack of services it is often a question of backing an institution or an individual to fill this gap.

Mareena association, Bratislava, SLOVAKIA

This is a good example of how grassroots initiatives become officially registered and broaden their scope to cater to new needs and changing patterns of migration. Building on the determination to welcome refugees to Slovakia, Mareena was established in 2017 and already has 10 paid workers and an army of volunteers. Now they target all migrants and society at large. They provide language courses, weekly community meetings, and a 10 week career mentoring course. The ideas of Mareena about how to include migrants in society were found to be close to those of WolnoS-towa in Warsaw, where two members of the Visegrad Caravan teamwork; so, it was decided to create transnational projects together. Without political support from the government, it is an achievement to have been able to set up a stable organisation bringing together newcomers and the local community.

«There are common elements of the majority of good practices highlighted by the Transeuropa Caravan with regard to the rights of mobile citizens. It is the fact of offering a multifaceted support to newcomers. These common elements often are: language courses, safe space to exchange on daily challenges the mobile citizens face, and everything that supports workers rights so they can understand their rights better, and eventually organise bottom-up».

*Igor Stokfiszewski,
Krytyka Polityczna*

Crossroads, Stockholm, SWEDEN

An organisation of the same size as Mareena, Crossroads has a strong record as a reception structure for newcomers to Sweden, catering to all their needs and also in finding them jobs. The organisation is divided into two sections. The first deals with immediate basic needs such as food, clothing, rest and leisure activities. The second deals with information and advice: assistance with writing a CV, finding accommodation, accessing health care, advice on how to interact with the legal and tax systems. There are barriers to settling in Sweden: “without a social security number, you’re working for a system but you cannot benefit from the services”. Delays are due to the large number of applications.

Helsinki, FINLAND

Following the visit to Crossroads, the Baltic team met in Helsinki with Markus Lyra and Kimmo Sasi, respectively manager and board member of Info Norden. Kimmo Sasi is a very experienced politician and provided interesting insights into the work of the Nordic Council grouping the Scandinavian countries. There could be lessons for the EU to learn on how the Council tackles barriers to freedom of movement with an action plan established on the basis of evidence from complaints, working closely with civil society organisations. In Helsinki, the Baltic Caravan team also held a meeting with representatives of the prime minister’s secretariat and the Ministry of Justice on the topics of responsibility for elections and participatory democracy to see how Finland is addressing these aspects.



Valid Alternatives, Padua, ITALY

Along the Mediterranean route focusing on mobility and migration, the Caravans encountered Mihaela Chirvasa, the founder of Valide Alternative per Integrazione, a voluntary organisation facilitating the integration of foreigners to Padua. Having first emerged as a spontaneous attempt to fill the gap in the assistance to her Romanian countrymen' integration in the local community, the organisation has grown in size and scope gradually extending its services to mobile EU citizens of other nationalities and, more recently, also non-EU migrants and asylum seekers. Initially offering administrative and technical support to newcomers, it has since also been providing Italian language and employment-enhancing courses thus echoing the needs and demands of its clients. Their example is valuable because Valid Alternatives additionally also provide a safe space for sharing of experiences among the beneficiaries through self-narration workshops. The organisation has grown organically, built strong links with the local community and provided a solid framework for the enhancement of rights of foreigners.

2.2. PARTICIPATION— AND IN PARTICULAR EUROPEAN POLITICAL RIGHTS AND EXAMPLES OF ADVANCED DEMOCRATIC PRACTICE IN THE RUN-UP TO THE EUROPEAN ELECTIONS

As pointed out in the overall assessment, the project benefited from the run-up to the European elections because Europe was on the agenda. There were a number of contexts to be explored relating to European elections:

- engagement with candidates during street actions, picnics, pre-arranged meetings or chance encounters;
- discussion with different political parties at their stands during public events and in city centres;
- participation of team members in events especially organised in the run-up to the European elections.

The Caravan teams stressed the importance of voting and the dangers brought on by the rise of populism and the extreme right, but also that involvement with Europe should not be limited to voting. Em-

phasis was therefore placed on the need for follow-ups after the elections by linking up with like-minded activist groups in other countries, lobbying the new European Parliament, and making use of tools such as petitions or European citizens' initiatives, whereby 1 million EU citizens can ask the European Commission to present a new law. The European elections also provided the right context for the teams to go to places where advanced forms of democracy are being put into practice. **One useful lesson from the project is to visit places where people are already intensely discussing the issues in order to raise a debate about Europe - it will follow more easily.** In the next section we will discuss how to do this in circumstances where the public is disengaged.

Best practices

Voting: when, where and how to choose

In the run-up to the European elections there was emphasis on combating fake news and rising populism, though perhaps not enough emphasis was placed on removing physical barriers to make voting easier. This is especially important for EU citizens voting in European elections not back home, but in their country of residence and where turnout is traditionally below 10%. In a meeting with the Justice Ministry in Helsinki we learned that in this cutting-edge country there is a targeted effort to enhance electoral participation of categories traditionally apathetic about voting, including young people, migrants and those without higher education.

The issue can also be approached from the other way round by making voting much easier for everyone including

hard-to-reach groups. Indeed in Scandinavia these groups have very few excuses not to vote. Our team stumbled into a public library in Stockholm in early May and were asked if they were there to vote! They also found early voting going on in an administrative office, a school and even a supermarket. The team concluded: "The early elections system simplifies the life of electors allowing them to vote whenever they want within a certain timespan and wherever they want..." The team was in Estonia on the day electronic voting was opened for the European elections. These practices should be better known in the rest of Europe and taken up for the next European elections to further increase turnout. Certainly reforms are necessary since only some 8% of 17 million EU citizens on average registered to vote in their country of residence. One possibility would be to make registration automatic.

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Transeuropa Caravans learnings:

«We recommend that more training opportunities be available for civil servants who are in direct contact with mobile EU citizens so that the potential for their transformative political engagement is activated. EU citizens on the move can be powerful agents of democratic change provided they understand their dynamic role in shaking up politics across borders. There is a need for training not only regarding techniques but also the content of engagement with the public, which assumes a broad knowledge of European affairs and sources of information».

Europaforum Hassleholm, SWEDEN

A successful and inspiring experiment was presented to our team by Freja Hagsund, project manager of the Europaforum Hassleholm - a small town in Sweden. Founded by an Austrian, this annual event brings political party leaders together with some 700 ordinary people in a delimited space and in a non-hierarchical way. It also tries to fill the potential gap between the EU Institutions and ordinary people, who often perceive the European Union as distant and out of reach. Despite different party political affiliation, debate is well-mannered. The formula has been adopted by Turku in Finland but appears to be unknown in the rest of the EU. The 2019 edition was attended by Baltic Caravan's team which was given a stand and the opportunity to talk extensively to candidates and civil society organisations dealing with migration. The forum was entirely devoted to the European elections and presented a unique opportunity for voters to understand what different political parties were doing and promising. In Sweden, all the people working on EU related issues know about this well established institution and use it as an opportunity to meet and share ideas.



—
Transeuropa Caravans learnings:
«If mobile citizens are to execute their political rights, local authorities should make an effort to raise their awareness on electoral rights and the understanding of active EU citizenship. This should happen way ahead of each European elections, as well as local elections. Information about voting procedures should be provided in several languages and distributed in places where mobile citizens are most likely to meet.»

Two place-based examples of advanced democratic practices and alternative governance

One of the priorities for the new European Commission is to organise a citizens' conference with the European Parliament on the future of Europe. Plenty of experts will offer their services but practitioners should not be ignored. The project found plenty of self-help examples of best practices by civil society organisations, networks and resource centres. The following examples go a step further:



The Western Caravan stopped in a particular town in Galicia, **A Coruña**, well known for its democratic practice. The Caravan took the opportunity to discuss with citizens visiting **Marea Atlántica's campaign event** the kind of Europe they dream of. Marea Atlantica is a political party which won the municipal elections in 2014 and which is running for a new mandate this year. The governance structure of this political party is horizontal and citizen participation is at the core of its action. The

Caravans' themes of freedom of movement and European rights were discussed in working groups. The team was very much impressed by the quality of the debate, in which everyone participated, making it evident that those engaged in local level activity are ready to participate in imagining an ideal Europe of equality for all migrants.

«So that's who we are, we are normal people who come from social movements, from the streets, taking responsibilities for our cities by becoming part of the institutions while preserving our way of doing politics».

A representative of the Marea Atlántica

Saillans, FRANCE, is a village south of Lyon that in 2014 elected a citizens' list rather than a political party to govern, on the basis not of a programme but on the basis of a specific methodology for citizen participation in decision making. It began when the previous mayor supported the construction of a supermarket which would have destroyed local commerce and so was voted out. Instead of a programme there is now collegiality, transparency and participation, decisions are taken by consensus at meetings of citizens.

«It is not the Mayor who makes all the decisions, but the whole municipal team together.»

A citizen from Saillans



Participatory urban innovation, Bologna, ITALY

The Urban innovation Foundation in Bologna is one of the first CSOs in Italy to unlock the potential of democratic innovations at a local level. Co-founded by the city and the University of Bologna, it seeks to offer a free space of experimentation, communication and co-creation of urban transformation in order to combat social, environmental and technological challenges facing the city. The Foundation fosters what they call 'civic imagination' by encouraging the co-creation and participation in the decision-making processes between the city administration, districts and citizens on projects developed along four main thematic axes: (1) Welcoming City, (2) New Urban Welfare, (3) Urban and Digital Democracy, (4) Sustainable City. For example, they use participatory budgeting, decide about the use of abandoned buildings, explore and exchange on topics of interest to the city (e.g. mobility, air quality, management of public spaces, etc.).

Friedrichshafen and Fridays For Future in general

The Central-Eastern Caravan team participated in the action and spoke in support of the way young people are uniting across the continent at an important moment in the run up to the European elections.

«We were really impressed by the energy, motivation, enthusiasm and engagement of young people in climate change or - according to the new naming - the climate crisis».

Katarzyna, Central Caravan

Not only was this particular event a success because of the demonstration but also because there was an opportunity for question and answer sessions and debate. Fridays for Future motivates activism more generally in the young generation. Not only in Germany but in some other stops as well, particularly in Scandinavia, the climate crisis was very much central to the European election campaign and it is one of the factors that might help explain the increase in turnout among first time voters. In Finland, for example, the European elections came just after national elections, in which a coalition of environmental organisations campaigned successfully for stronger commitments to protect the climate. The level of awareness and the priority of climate issues for the EU was, however, by no means the same throughout all the Caravans routes.



2.3. BELONGING — A SENSE OF COMMON IDENTITY, BEING AN ACTIVE EUROPEAN CITIZEN AND SHARING BEST PRACTICES ACROSS EUROPE

This third part addresses freedom of movement as a much broader concept going beyond rights to create a sense of European belonging and solidarity. At a conference on 7 May in Dresden, the birthplace of Pegida, hosted by an adult education organisation called “Weiterdenken”, these issues were addressed. In an interview with the team, Stefan Schonfelder from the Heinrich Boll Foundation said that “people are really unaware of how the EU is connected to their lives however accurately we can explain how the Institutions work”. They are aware of the practical advantages that the EU has to offer such as freedom of movement and no roaming charges when they travel, but a true sense of “belonging” as European citizens is not generally the case.

A weak sense of European identity is also being hampered by the resurgence of nationalism and the normalisation of far-right discourse. The whole aim of the Caravans project is to open people’s eyes to a broader vision of Europe and create links across borders. This requires a multiplicity

of different techniques, opportunities and places to make it possible to engage with people and plant messages about being European. These messages are not just about explaining the Institutions in Brussels but also about appealing to common values in support of democracy, human rights and the protection of minorities, which should underpin them. Projects like Caravans and others, that take young people on journeys across borders, are both practical and idealistic, promoting a European space for freedom and sharing human endeavours and struggles for a better life.

Best practices

The Caravans project as a whole for a range of engagement techniques

The variety of training and facilitation techniques used by the four teams of the Caravans in Spring 2019 was striking. It would actually be possible to draw up a catalogue of techniques and places used for public engagement with Europe so that future projects do not need to restart from scratch. Firstly there are the events and organisations, which projects such as this one can join and which are tailor-made to promote debate about Europe. Across Europe, in addition to the European spaces created by the Commission and European Parliament, there are think-tanks, cultural institutes and other initiatives which organise numerous events and consider themselves as venues for debate on the future of Europe. It is also possible, however, in cooperation with a local host, to reach a wider audience by bringing a product - a book or a film about Europe - which helps to get the audience thinking before launching a discussion.



All Caravans mixed pre-prepared events with spontaneous action in streets, city squares or parks to reach all sections of the community: performances, games, gadgets, sharing food and drink breaks the ice. The teams used opportunities to raise issues at open days or at markets. A very important and underused network is constituted by the resource of numerous non-profit and co-working spaces, former factories and abandoned buildings taken over by civil society and social enterprises. The Caravan teams held European debates in such centres in Bologna, Barcelona, Budapest, Marseilles and Zagreb. Europe should be present in all places where people connect.

Taping action in front of the theatre in Bautzen and on Marienplatz, Munich on Europe Day

This technique, by no means the only one used by the Caravan teams, was chosen because it can have a very big impact and reach a lot of people in a relatively short time. Everything depends on the choice of the statements written on the banners to attract attention and strike a chord with the public. The benefits of this facilitation technique are: anybody can do it; banners of different colours are available; choosing the statement is good for team building; it's very visible; it's attractive – “our experience shows that many people were interested in and intrigued by our statements”. Other examples could have been chosen from other routes. One used street performances, another a “wheel of fortune” quiz game and picnics, whilst red ribbons or “red lines” against racism were also popular.

Omas gegen Rechts, AUSTRIA

“Omas gegen Rechts” can be translated as “Grannies against the far right”. The group operates with a smile but sends a clear warning about how voting for the extreme right can be dangerous now and in the future. It has been chosen as a best practice because it can easily be implemented in other European countries. The message is that however old you are you can and should act for positive change and protest against inequality, discrimination and violence. The image is effective and backed by a trademark knitted hat and other promotional materials. OGR members show impressive dedication, open-mindedness and knowledge and are in general very warm and likeable. Something similar may be going on in Lisbon where the Caravans discovered a group of old ladies who are working with the younger generation to produce traditional garments in new ways which they can sell. They engaged in a debate with the team about the threats to Europe and European elections.

Cargonomia, Budapest, HUNGARY

This is another example of an organisation with a formula that could be successfully implemented in the rest of Europe. Cargonomia is the formalisation of a pre-existing cooperation between three socially and environmentally conscious small enterprises with complementary roles: a DIY bicycle repair shop and social cooperative; an organic vegetable farm and a sustainable agriculture education center which provides weekly vegetable boxes and a self-organised bike messenger and delivery company. They also attract international volunteers and have a great impact on the local community.

«The amazing thing about Cargonomia is that they operate steadily in such a complex high pressure and politicised context. They manage to stay autonomous and influence their surroundings showing alternatives are possible because of their small- scale operations».

Team of Cargonomia



W*ORT-Lustenau, AUSTRIA

Located in a small city, this place is open to people of different generations and nationalities. Children will find toys, books, and a modern functional play area; older children may join workshops on diverse topics (art and culture, ecology and more); adults and seniors may enjoy poetry evenings, concerts or workshops. W*ORT also operates in schools and makes a point of asking people with migrant backgrounds to share their skills and this way it is contributing to the integration of the local community. Generations work together and volunteers organise creative writing sessions whilst a number of other activities focus on education and confidence building. The team writes that “not infrequently good products are created from this interaction”. The organisation is a member of the International Alliance of Youth Writing Centers.



Right to the city, CROATIA

In the Croatian capital, our Caravan encountered two organisations that channel knowledge and skills that are coming from grassroots work into fighting against bureaucratic and/or neoliberal local governance i.e. the inefficiency in the provision of public services, lack of public infrastructure, big private projects that disregard the need of the local community. Pogon and Right to the city - one a private-public partnership and the other a CSO - both counter these trends by demanding more democracy in ways local decisions are made. They stand out from many similar initiatives by how well they are connected with and learn from similar initiatives across borders and by fully incorporating

the needs of migrants - whose voice is not formally acknowledged in the city's institutional architecture - into their demands, thus fostering equal chances and migrant inclusion. For these organisations in Zagreb, civic actors are not competitors but form part of a single ecosystem: each organization is independent but they all support each other, sharing spaces, joint activities, putting funds together in order to have a bigger outreach, sharing skills and leaning on each other's expertise to work on different issues.

Concentric circles of belonging, SLOVENIA

On our route through Slovenia, we were struck by Project Multivision, the immersive fruit of collaboration between Povod Institute which is the coordinator of Anna Lindh Foundation for Euro-Med dialogue in Slovenia and the APIS Institute. Multivision explores different layers of cultural identity of foreigners, migrants and asylum seekers and other groups on the margins of Slovenian society. By employing engagement techniques inspired by arts and theatre, it invites participants originating from different backgrounds to question the meaning of European belonging by exposing their vulnerability to one another which exposes frictions and multiperspectivity in what some on the continent call the European way of life. In addition to this flagship activity, the project also offers free workshops and courses which provide skills which increase the employability of migrants.



CONCLUSIONS ON HOW TO SUPPORT EU MOBILE CITIZENS

One conclusion of the Transeuropa Caravans is that civil society organisations, EU institutions and other public authorities do have a huge pool of talent on which to draw and which they should try to keep active - not just in the run-up to a European election but on a more regular basis.

A useful practical exercise based on this project and others would be to create a resource on facilitation techniques to help bridge the gap between people's everyday concerns and Europe. These range from games to draw in passersby and test their knowledge, to "red lines" in the public place, picnics, street performances and film shows.

Gadgets and performances we designed for the project can be expanded as ice-breakers to make contact with citizens in public. In the run-up to the European elections, sources of information on

"Europe in your region" were one response to this need for Europe to be seen as less distant. There are also sources of EU-related information which people see all the time such as food labels and examples such as free roaming charges in the Union. All this, however, remains at a superficial level and does not explain how the decision-making process actually works or how EU funds arrive, through various stages, to the local neighbourhood. Nor does it explain how individuals and communities can influence the EU. To counteract many lies or misunderstandings about the EU, it is also necessary to have a good sense of the scope and limits of EU competence across different policy areas. There is a need for training not only with techniques but also with the content of engagement activities with the public, which requires a broad knowledge of European affairs and sources of information.

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Transeuropa Caravans learnings:

«To engage with the public about Europe, it is best to start off by avoiding the EU and asking about people's concerns and those of their community, it is necessary to keep an open mind, so as to attract questions from a wide range of political viewpoints which do not exclude anyone. It is only after listening to people that it is possible to explain how Europe is relevant to their everyday concerns».



3.1. EUROPEAN ELECTIONS 2019: WHAT NEXT?

Planning and carrying out activities on the routes was made easier by the run-up to the EP elections, which this year benefited from greater public awareness and interest, although to varying degrees this depended on the place. The Caravans were able to link with more large-scale and frequent events than would normally be the case on European topics and also to connect with local partners sharing a concern to take the opportunity of the elections to raise the profile of their issues. Ahead of the EU elections it was also easier to connect with the public with spontaneous actions in public spaces. Connections were also made with candidates for election to the European Parliament. The challenge now is how to keep up these efforts so that at the next European elections in 2024 turnout increases well beyond 50%.

«The project has been a success so far in addressing these aims. In the run-up to the elections for the European Parliament, the arrival on a town square of a group of young activists was well received and it was a powerful visual reminder that the elections are European».

Tony Venables, ECIT Foundation

3.2. EUROPEAN NETWORKING

Building from the local level network to the European wide network and campaign

The project produced good examples of local actions that can be scaled-up across Europe. The Conell Nacional de les Dones de Catalunya is a body working on programs for gender equality and female empowerment, covering specific topics such as the inclusion of migrant women or the promotion of female entrepreneurs. The Western Caravan's team said: "It was really interesting to see how these women are connected and how they really work towards the same aims with 400 organizations in this network and at a transnational level". In Barcelona, the Caravan team held a meeting with a group of different women's rights organizations hosted by **Fondacio Aroa**, which has recently launched a platform for a Feminist Europe with support from a consultancy called Eurolocal. Other women's organisations engaged during the tours could well benefit from connection with a European initiative, which may succeed because it has such a strong local base - i.e. Grannies against far right in Austria, or their counterparts in Lisbon, "A avo veio trablhar", which held a meeting with the Western Caravan team to share their concerns about growing racism and xenophobia in Europe.





Connecting organisations working with the same methods for the same people - the example of freedom of movement and migration

This can apply to almost any sphere of activity but it is particularly evident in the area of European rights to freedom of movement and migration. Whether it is the Centrum Pro Integacji in Malda Boleslaw (Poland), the intercultural centre in Prague or Crossroads in Stockholm, there are some similarities regarding what the organisations actually do, despite the obvious differences due to context and emphasis. To a large extent these organisations are based on the principle that their door is open to all migrants, whether they are EU citizens or third country nationals. They may have been set up to respond to a particular need - for example the organisation in Slovakia which was created in 2015 to welcome refugees and counteract the negative policy of the government - but like this organisation they end up catering to all those on the move, something inevitable as patterns of migration shift and become more global. There is also a trend towards providing a comprehensive range of services under one roof, from immediate emergency help and shelter for destitute new arrivals to advice about language courses and their organization, housing and local services, legal advice about residence rights and employment contracts.

A trend observed on the tours was towards initiatives to break down barriers between migrants, European citizens and local people. Sometimes these initiatives are a reaction against anti-immigration rhetoric by the mayor and other politicians, sometimes they are introduced with the support of more enlightened local

authorities. The organisations are in some cases getting support from the EU for the integration of third country nationals and other programmes and will occasionally take up a case with EU authorities.

We would like to see a European eco-system and operational means for transnational networking among local organisations and resource centres providing services to migrant citizens and defending their rights. We believe that the EU could also try to scale-up the experiences of the Nordic Council which has established a partnership approach to working with NGO's to remove barriers to freedom of movement, beyond SOLVIT.

«Most issues we face cross borders and, therefore, the solutions to them must cross borders too. On our roads to European democracy, we discovered that ‘together we stand, divided we fall’».

Petar Markovic, ECIT Foundation

Networking for democracy and a new politics

A key success of the Transeuropa Caravans tour was to uncover a wide range of highly advanced practices - not just participatory, but also direct democracy ones - which, actually, range across a much wider array of different types of settings and organisations than is generally thought. Reclaiming abandoned factories or other spaces and putting them to new uses on a participatory basis (Marseille), the women's movement (Barcelona) and other examples should be compiled which could inspire social entrepreneurs in other places. This includes Brussels, where a

project is starting to create an incubator for organisations working in the area of citizenship and democracy and a public space or agora in and around an underused office complex just opposite the European Parliament - Salon for European Civil Organisations (SECO). When it comes to participatory democracy, most people think about the major “rebel” cities such as Naples or Barcelona, participatory budgeting or citizens' assemblies drawn by lot. There is much more to it than that, as the examples of A Coruña and Saillans have shown.



3.3. BLACK SPOTS

The risk of painting too rosy a picture and the need to pay attention to the advice provided by deserts and places where people rarely go

Although it is right to show that across Europe there are far more advanced practices than are generally believed to be, which are reasons for optimism, there is also a retreat to nationalism, a shrinking civil space and resistance to change which can take on extreme forms. How to explain such phenomena, such as the city in Poland where every second bus driver is Ukrainian, but where the dominant political discourse is that foreigners should go home, for example?

Three critical situations identified by the Caravans should be mentioned and here action is required, not just by civil society but also by public authorities including the EU institutions:

— **Advice deserts.** There is a contrast between the capitals where some services exist for migrants and small or medium sized cities where there is nothing, not even where there are important inflows of foreign workers from across the border and enterprise zones to attract new investments. The only support is management provided by trade unions. In the case of temporary agency workers, exploitation is strong, with many living in substandard housing and working under near slavery conditions. Even in places where there is a reputable employer such as Skoda, it is

not right that the company should be the only source of advice. Family members of the workers also need advice about schools, housing and integration in the local community. **The Caravan teams met a number of workers who, having had to fight for their own rights, were prepared to defend the rights of others. With support, they may be encouraged to fill the gap with reference to availability of advice.** There is a need for further research across Europe to identify the zones of significant migration movement without any corresponding institutional support.

— **Support for civil society under pressure.** The impression from the Caravans routes is that there are initiatives across Europe which are springing up continuously to counteract anti-immigration or racist rhetoric. **In areas of migration organisations are seen badly by governments as acting against the national interest.** Even a multicultural resource centre in Warsaw where one of the training sessions for this project took place is under threat. We believe that a new EU programme on rights and values should be designed to provide structural support to such organisations.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CIVIL SOCIETY, LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND THE EU

The impact of the project went beyond some 5000 people reached face-by-face creating a significant social media footprint, which was echoed in the press. These impacts clearly support efforts to address challenges arising from intra-EU mobility whilst also promoting and facilitating the effective exercise of free movement rights by EU citizens. They lead to the increased focus on the exercise of democratic rights in the run-up to the European elections and to the increased exercise of European political rights in general. The project threw a searchlight on a wide variety of themes and approaches to engaging people in Europe with European citizens' rights to freedom of movement

and cross-border linkage of local struggles for more democracy as the leitmotif. The run-up to the European elections saw the emergence of an eco-system of similar projects and volunteers for "This time I'm voting" and people working together. The impact of the project was further increased by each of the three partner organisations: Krytyka Polityczna published a series of articles, the ECIT Foundation made it a central feature of its annual Summer University on European citizenship held in September 2019 in Brussels, and the Caravans ended their tour at the Transeuropa Festival organised by the lead partner, European Alternatives in November 2019 in Palermo: www.transeuropafestival.eu

The turn-out in the 2019 European elections reached just over 50% for the first time in 20 years- largely due to projects such as this and young people making their concerns about the future of Europe after more than a decade of crises, their issue. The EU has a debt of gratitude to the younger generation and the 21st century increase in transnational civil society activism and social movements. Still, this is not good enough. For example, less than 8% of 15 million EU citizens registered to vote in their country of residence with possibly even less voting back home. Reforms are needed to encourage voting without borders and increase turnout well beyond 50%. These recommendations are directed at continuing the efforts made by projects such as TEC2019 until the next European elections in 2024.

For the first time, the European elections were a social fact for the young generation and marked the emergence of a European political sphere. The project reveals though too not so much an EU of unity in diversity as one of contrasts between regions of Europe and also within countries. Transnational issues, whether climate change or migration, are on the agenda in some places, but almost entirely absent in others. Sharp regional differences emerge from each of the tours, so one size never fits all. For example, the EU could learn from the pragmatic approach of more advanced cross-border regions about how to tackle barriers to freedom of movement and work with civil society. On the other hand, there are other areas where migrant workers are disconnected from local or European sources and have nowhere to turn to defend their rights. In all countries there are city areas with European offices

and services and active EU citizens with advice deserts just next door or in smaller towns.

Civil society organisations and policy makers need to be more aware of the contrasting local situations and that uniform legal standards do not reach remote regions and communities. Transeuropa Caravans found local initiatives which bring together EU citizens particularly at risk of discrimination and being deprived of their rights because they are job seekers, belong to minority groups or are vulnerable to exploitation. In many regions, the rhetoric against migration is causing local tensions even in places which have a history of tolerance and multiculturalism, let alone those where there are dangers of reviving old animosities. Despite a shrinking space for freedom of association in many parts of Europe, civil society shows the way towards more European solidarity. The striking feature is that when people decide to work together, how they do it is so similar across borders despite such contrasts and the rise of populist, nationalistic politics.

Building a European public sphere should start with a transnational civil society, the values of which are summed up in the following quotation: "Europe represents a space of free movement, a big house, where you can meet different cultures, learn and live experiences, that become opportunities for human growth. In order to change things, it is necessary to meet the difference. Multiculturality is the element that lies at the base of the great social transformations, a key to interpretation, an instrument of action, a weapon of defence for the construction of a fair,

just and supportive society” (Valid Alternatives, Padua). In this way, the Europe of contrasts ceases to be an obstacle and becomes an opportunity.



RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Work towards a European network of associations defending European citizens' rights. The need is evident, since over the last ten years the numbers of EU citizens resident in other countries has doubled to reach 17 million and many feel under-represented. Transnational associative movements are well-established in the areas of asylum and immigration, whereas freedom of movement within the EU and the defence of European rights is not supported by a similar ecosystem, even for the most vulnerable groups. TEC 2019 showed that it should be possible to fill this gap because there are similar trends and working practices among organisations which can gain from cooperation. The project created a database of contacts of local hosts (authorities and NGOs) who are resources on inclusion policies and can exchange experiences at European level. The similarities are also strong despite the different regional and local contexts and whether the associations are working in partnership or in opposition to local authorities. For example, there is impetus towards “all our welcome” policies so that associations set up often by an active EU citizen for newcomers from one country of origin expand to take in others, so that they can use the advantage of sharing and multicultural dialogue. Some centres cater for immediate needs of all migrants for shelter and emergency help, whilst others offer the full range or just some of the services such as language courses or training to find a job. Others use culture to break down barriers between EU citizens with the local population.

2. Carry out more place - based research into migration flows and needs for local support.

Free movement of persons within the EU and migration more generally are areas where there should be more EU effort to support solidarity and integration, particularly through its regional and social funds. The future EU multiannual financial framework (MFF) is currently being negotiated and new programmes will be put in place. Caravans 2019 has highlighted stark geographical contrasts in the availability of services for migrants and EU citizens. There should be a study of intra-EU and international migration across Member States to assess where there is most need for support services and where these are lacking. In response, EU funds should be operated on a more decentralised basis. EU cohesion policy provides the right framework to put in place European support mechanisms linking countries of origin with countries of destination and for setting up services to reach remote and disadvantaged communities working closely with civil society.

3. Take inspiration from local practices to introduce a European democratic culture.

A lesson from Caravans 2019 is not to reinvent the wheel but take the debate about Europe to places where people come together anyway in the community to debate issues. Such places for participation and direct democracy are connected to movements to reclaim the freedom of the city, reform the way social movements and political parties operate. They are far more numerous than generally thought and take a variety of forms: nonprofit resource centres where local community groups come together and provide each other with mutual support,

social innovation start-up and co-working spaces or cultural and community centres where migrants and newcomers find their way and participate in activities with local people. Such places have an interest in ensuring the democratic participation of users in order to persuade local authorities of their value as places of urban regeneration and social solidarity. Many Caravans 2019 events took place in such venues which was a good way to reach a critical mass of individuals and organisations. The spread of local advanced democratic practice should be encouraged and is often introducing new styles of debate and collective decision-making which could inspire others, including EU policy makers.

4. Train and involve young people in Europe.

TEC2019 and other projects have created a pool of talent which should be kept on board by civil society, local authorities and the EU. People will not show interest in Europe until Europe shows interest in them. Top-down information campaigns and impersonal electronic consultation mechanisms will only work with insiders and stakeholders. Reaching the unreached and in particular minority groups means meeting them in person and first listening to their concerns and only then talking about the EU and spreading the message more widely through social media. Answering questions about how the EU affects everyday life or explaining the scope and limits of European rights is challenging. There are channels starting at the local level through which activists can join forces with like-minded campaigns across borders and take their concerns to the EU. This requires awareness of citizen lobbying, citizens' initiatives, petitions

or appeals to apply European law and values. Participatory communication works but requires facilitators with a broad range of skills and knowledge. The participants in this and similar projects advocate more training in active European citizenship round the concepts of rights, participation and belonging. The young people who helped increase turnout in the European elections should be represented in the EU action plan for democracy and the citizens' conference on the future of Europe.

5. Create a clearing house of citizen engagement techniques. The use of innovative facilitation techniques, gadgets and games is advocated to “break the ice”. To illustrate what is meant by European values, one Caravan team used red sticky tape in public squares, another a game with a wheel of fortune so people can test their knowledge, whilst others concentrated on theatre and street performances, picnics, focus group discussions and alternative forms of city tour. Rather than each project having to start from scratch, it would be an advantage to create a central collection of engagement techniques to which everyone has free access. In this way, too, use can be scaled up and spread to where it is most needed, for example in civic education programmes in and out of school. The techniques do not have to be sophisticated or expensive. To avoid mistakes and inappropriate use, there is also a need for training on the choice of techniques and how to adapt them to different cultures and audiences.

6. Support media pluralism and independent media. Citizen action at the local level, bringing together people from different backgrounds and often finding new solutions to apparently intractable problems is a rich but largely unknown resource. Most activists have contacts with similar initiatives to theirs in other countries. Some initiatives spread naturally, whilst others are brought together in European networks, but most stay out in the cold. The scaling up of local action and interconnections across borders face barriers such as lack of opportunity, language and understanding of the different context of other countries. Often the same way of doing things is hidden behind different facades. Bringing local civil society out of the shadows requires more independent media operating transnationally, as a minority of dedicated journalists and non-commercial media have realised. Europe is generally portrayed through the national perspective of the government role in the EU institutions, whilst there is another Europe out there beyond national stereotypes operating across borders with its own stories and which deserve attention. There should be more EU support and funding for independent media reporting on peoples' local struggles and making connections.

7. Counter nationalism and political divisiveness with a clear narrative about European values. Europe lacks a fact-based, rational debate about migration policies. National and European politicians must speak out about the positive role migration and freedom of movement play and combat appeals to xenophobic, even racist sentiment. Action at the local level is about different groups living together. Efforts at community cohesion are made much more difficult and can be irreparably damaged if the dominant national political discourse is to appeal to lack of trust in foreigners and create a hostile climate towards newcomers in practice and in law. It is easier to destroy by appeals to national populism or withdraw funding and otherwise limit freedom of association, than it is to create. Europe must become much more of a counterweight and assert the values of its Charter of Fundamental Rights.

Finally, we urge that this statement and above all the rich volume of material on which it is based should be carefully considered. Follow-up consultations on how to implement such recommendations should be organised by EU policy makers.



- 5 -

25 GOOD PRACTICES COLLECTED BY TRANSEUROPA CARAVANS

In the course of 2019, Transeuropa Caravans reached over 80 locations in 38 cities. In this summary we highlighted 25 good practices – local or regional initiatives that the Transeuropa Caravans identified and met in person across Europe in spring and autumn 2019. We believe that these stories

and initiatives can help policy makers and active citizens across the EU to gain more understanding of how to support freedom of movement and mobile citizens rights:

transeuropaCaravans.eu/transeuropa-Caravans-a-collection-of-good-practices/

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to warmly thank all the local hosts in 15 countries who welcomed the Transeuropa Caravans in 2019. It is thanks to your work, determination and expressions of solidarity that the Transeuropa Caravans project could be so inspiring and interesting for a broader public across Europe.

This document was published thanks to the collaboration and contribution of: Hundreds of volunteers and activists encountered by the Transeuropa Caravans in 2019, trainers and activists engaged in the Transeuropa Caravans Central, Western, Mediterranean, Visegrad and Baltic routes

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European Alternatives is a civil society organisation working to promote democracy, equality and culture beyond the nation state.

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Krytyka Polityczna

www.krytykapolityczna.pl

Krytyka Polityczna is a large-scale Central and Eastern European liberal network of institutions and activists. It was established in 2002 following the publication of an Open Letter titled, “The Open Letter to the European Public Opinion”, demanding a more open and integrated European policy from the Polish elites.

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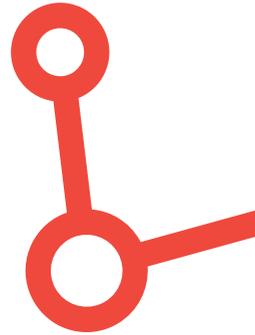
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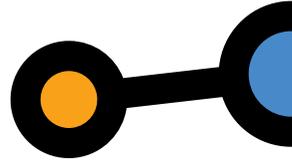
ECIT Foundation is a think-tank devoted to the research, advocacy and promotion of European citizenship. As a resource centre on this topic, it brings together policy-makers, transnational activists and academia.

PHOTO CREDITS

PAGE 8 AND 9. First training of Transeuropa Caravans in Warsaw - Photo by Jakub Szafrński. Second training of Transeuropa Caravans in Berlin - Photo by Marta Cillero Manzano. Working with the team of European May on a transnational campaign ahead of the European Elections - Photo by Jakub Szafrński. PAGE 10. The team of the Western Route: Doina, Claraluz, Emma and Adriana on their way to Spain. PAGE 11. Central Eastern Route. Western Route. Visegrad Route. Baltic Route. PAGE 14. The Western Route meets Fundació Aroa and the Eurolocal consultancy in Barcelona. The Baltic Route joins Fridays For Future demonstration in Tampere. Photo by Luca Michele Piscitelli. PAGE 17. First training of Transeuropa Caravans in Warsaw. Photo by Jakub Szafrński. PAGE 20. The Visegrad route on the road on the way to Prague. PAGE 23. Street actions by the Central Eastern route in Munich on Europe Day. PAGE 25. Claraluz and Emma hosting a training on the rights of EU mobile citizens in A Coruña. PAGE 26. The Western route meets Jean-Baptiste Marine, Urban Planner of the Saillans municipality. Photo by Adriana Díaz Martín-Zamorano. PAGE 28. The Central Eastern Route organising an action on Europe Day in Dresden. PAGE 29. The Central Eastern Route meets Cargonoma, a logistics center that offers solutions for the sustainable transport of food in Hungary. PAGE 30. The Central Eastern Route meets W*ORT, a creative writing centre that organises writing workshops to develop language skills and stimulate self-confidence among kids. In Lustenau the centre has been running for over 5 years. PAGE 32. Training at the European Parliament office in Helsinki by the Baltic Route. Actions in front of the Parliament of Finland where negotiations about climate change policies are being held. PAGE 34. Street actions by the Central Eastern route in Munich on Europe Day. PAGE 35. The Western Caravan visiting the University of Zaragoza where students pinned the European countries where they've lived. Photo by Adriana Díaz Martín-Zamorano.



This publication is funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020). The content of this publication represents only the views of the author and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



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