EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

(To be filled in and uploaded as deliverable in the Portal Grant Management System, at the due date foreseen in the system.

⚠️ *Please provide one sheet per event (one event = one workpackage = one lump sum).)*

PROJECT	
Participant:	Alternatives européennes Paris
PIC number:	941964479
Project name and acronym:	TRANSEUROPA ASSEMBLIES — TEA

EVENT DESCRIPTION	
Event number:	2
Event name:	Kickoff Transeuropa - Power to the People: rise costs of living
Type:	Assembly format - Kickoff Transeuropa
In situ/online:	Online
Location:	online
Date(s):	16.02.2023
Website(s) (if any):	https://euroalter.com/report-power-to-the-people-how-do-rising-living-costs-affect-your-life/
Participants	
Female:	152
Male:	93
Non-binary:	5
From country Germany:	189
From country 2 France:	4
From country 3 Romania:	4
From country 4: Belgium	4
From country 5: The Netherlands	3
From country 6: Italy	21
From country 7:Portugal	3

From country 8: Spain	3		
From country 9: Austria	4		
From country 10: Denmark	2		
From country 11: Portugal	2		
From country 12: Sweden	2		
From country 13: Bulgaria	2		
From country 14: Slovakia	2		
From country 15: Czechia	2		
From country 16: Greece	3		
Total number of participants:	250	From total number of countries:	16

Description

Provide a short description of the event and its activities.

The online Transeuropa Assembly "Power to the People: rising cost of living" brought together more than 250 people from 16 different countries.

Organised by a coalition of partners involving European Alternatives, Europe Calling, Citizens Takeover Europe, EUI-STG Democracy Forum, Mehr Democratie, Desire Foundation and Another Europe is Possible, the online assembly via zoom opened the series of Transeuropa assemblies by discussing a topic of importance to all citizens at the moment: the ongoing economic pressures in Europe. The assembly had simultaneous translation in English, Italian and German throughout. As the kick-off online assembly of the Transeuropa Assemblies project the priorities were to set the tone of citizen empowerment and dialogue across borders and to discuss issues that are affecting citizens in their everyday lives in a language that is understandable and relatable and with an openness to emotion as well as reason.

Description of the Event/ Content & Methodology

The assembly began with an opening plenary featuring contributions from residents of France, Italy, Romania and Germany.

The social rights activist Seema (Marseille) read a poem touching on the general crisis of low pay across many sectors, poor healthcare provision, the high cost of food and housing, and the particular impact the crisis has had on racialised and minoritised communities. The poem highlighted the growing level of organisation to push back against low pay and high bills, including strikes in all sectors and the 'Don't Pay' movement.

Immediately emphasising the common cross-border experience, Diletta Bellotti (Palermo) started her contribution with a reference to Italy's own growing 'Don't Pay' movement. She highlighted the dire state of the Italian economy where average wages have not been adjusted for over thirty years whilst inflation is now in double digits. She criticised the fossil fuel companies who have used this moment of crisis as a profiteering opportunity, and referenced Naomi Klein's theory of 'disaster capitalism' as a model to explain their behaviour. She advocated an intersectional response to the crisis, joining the climate, labour, migrant, feminist and LGBTQI+ movements to resist systemic exploitation.

From Cluj-Napoca, a video capturing the key moments of a local protest and march against the rising costs of living was shared. The two protests 'Everything is too expensive! Utilities, food & housing!' were organised over 2022 by Social Housing NOW! in collaboration with the Socialist Action Group, Gastivists Romania, Fridays for Future Romania and the Syndicate of the Militant Students. The video sums up those protests that were held in the city centre, involving under-represented groups such as the local Roma community. You can watch the video here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=10NCrMXuwYg

Finally Maximilian Fries (Erlangen) shared tweets from the founder of the NGO "sanktionsfrei", which helps people who have had their social benefits cut. The tweets showed the extreme hardship now faced by many

individuals who were already struggling as a result of high inflation and the failure of the state to ensure everyone in society's basic needs are met.

After the opening plenary, participants were split into 38 breakout zoom rooms limited to 7 people in each room, allowing for participants to speak, share and listen to each other's lived experience of the cost of living crisis. Many participants found commonalities across borders in each person's experience of the cost of living crisis. In the closing plenary participants had a chance to share feedback on their experience. There was a strong appreciation for the opportunity to reflect and share across borders, creating a transnational dialogue. People also shared their sense of empowerment about political solutions to the crisis, with some sharing their experience organising for higher pay acting collectively within trade unions, and others emphasising the complimentary power of the 'Don't Pay' protests. Recommendations and ideas from the assembly will be taken forward in further Power to the People webinars, and to Transnational European Assemblies organised by European Alternatives and other partners over the coming year.

The event was advertised on social media and via partners newsletters to ensure a variety of profile of participants.

Participants
The participants came from 16 EU countries and had a diversity of backgrounds. 75% were female or non-binary; 55% were under the age of 32; 25% considered themselves as part of a discriminated group; 30% without further education and 30% precariously employed or unemployed.

The event involved everyday people, workers, students, unemployed people, elected representatives at local, national and european levels,, academics and journalists, but all participants were regarded equally as citizens and given equal opportunity to contribute to the discussion through breakout groups. The format promoted horizontal exchange, and the opening statements encouraged people to share their feelings and personal experiences as well as their analysis of the situation. The simultaneous interpretation in the plenary (with two interpreters alternating for each language English, Italian and German) enabled transnational exchange, and language specific breakout rooms allowed people to express themselves in their native language if they wished and to benefit from interpretation. Each breakout room had a maximum of 7 participants, which provided for an intimate exchange. Challenges remained in terms of providing enough moderation and guidance for the breakout rooms given the number of the breakout rooms, which resulted in some mixed quality of discussion and exchange.

Future Activities

This online Transeuropa assembly is the first of a series of transnational 'Power to the People' online assemblies leading up to the European elections. Participants from this first online assembly will be invited to join a dedicated, multilingual, whatsapp or telegram group which will continue to discuss the topic and help prepare the next Power to the People online assembly in a highly participative way.

As everyone of us is affected by political choices on the European Level, we want to complement expert discussions by discussions between EU citizens and residents. To make all voices heard, we will split up into small groups to give everybody a trusted space to speak and the capacity to build self-confidence in online civic participation.

This event is a chance for participants to express themselves and to listen and learn about different perspectives on shared European problems. Because reflecting on common fears, hopes and challenges is the first step of building a European community of citizens that can make their voices heard. As we all sit in one boat, we should start navigating it together!

Policy Orientations

The online Transeuropa assembly constituted a learning process as much in its format as in its tackled topics.

The assembly brought Europe closer to the people and created a sense of connection between the people. It allowed for making politics more personal, thanks to the more intimate format of the breakout groups to exchange about personal experiences that are impacted by politics. It also highlighted the importance of creating a safe space quickly, so that randomly invited participants develop the possibility to connect on a deeper and more personal level. Research shows that for meaningful dialogue we have to create an atmosphere of trust in which everybody feels safe and valued. In practice, this means everyone had the dedicated time to express themselves individually and express how their lives are impacted by the rise of the cost of living.

As a result of that trust space discussion, the main following policy recommendations were formulated:

- Capping energy costs: whether on gaz, petrol or electricity, prices should be capped depending on their levels of inflation, with quickly implementable mechanisms while ensuring this doesn't create too much fluctuation or instability in global prices
- Taking this energy cost crisis as an opportunity to accelerate the green transition towards renewable energies, which will also support EU energy independence from other regions of the world
- Protection of the most vulnerable population:
    - an "energy cost" safety fund for the most disadvantaged people, to prevent cases of extreme poverty and homelessness
    - A "food stamp" system for the same above reasons
- Supporting banks in limiting loan interests, to ensure people are still able to get mortgages which will ensure housing independence and limit real estate speculation

	HISTORY OF CHANGES	
VERSION	**PUBLICATION DATE**	**CHANGE**
1.0	01.04.2022	Initial version (new MFF).