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Report on the mid-term evaluation of the implementation of the Europe for Citizens programme 2014-2020

Accompanying the document

Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions

on the mid-term evaluation of the implementation of the Europe for Citizens programme 2014-2020

{COM(2018) 170 final}

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Report on the mid-term evaluation of the implementation of the Europe for Citizens programme 2014-2020

Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTION

Purpose and scope

This staff working document sets out the results of the mid-term evaluation of the Europe for Citizens Programme (EfCP) 2014-2020. The evaluation was carried out under the provisions of Article 15.4 (a) of the Council Regulation establishing the EfCP for the period 2014-2020[1]. It aims mainly to assess the programme's results and outputs compared to its objectives and to assess qualitative and quantitative aspects of the programme's implementation. It also assesses the extent to which the recommendations of the previous 2007-2013 EfCP's evaluation have been followed and whether the programme is on track to achieving its objectives.

The results of the mid-term evaluation have fed into the Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, which this document accompanies.

It will also help the reflection on the programme's future. Under the Regulation the Commission is requested to present a communication on the continuation of the EfCP by 31 December 2018.

The programme was assessed based on the following main evaluation criteria:

- its relevance in relation to the identified needs it aims to address;

- effectiveness;

- efficiency in relation to resources used and assessment of the potential for simplifying procedures and reducing burden;

- consistency with other EU instruments that have common objectives;

- EU added value compared to what could have been achieved by participating countries on their own; and

- available alternative measures and their potential impact.

Geographically, the evaluation covers the 28 EU Member States and 5 countries which signed agreements to participate in the EfCP (Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia).

The reference period for this mid-term evaluation is the first three years of the programme' implementation from April 2014 to December 2016.

2. BACKGROUND TO THE PROGRAMME

Since the Maastricht Treaty was adopted in 1993 introducing the concept of European citizenship, the EU has recognised that it needs to bring itself closer to citizens and to enable them to fully participate in building the EU project, while emphasising its common and shared values. The EfCP is one of the instruments that can achieve this political objective.

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[1] Council Regulation (EU) No 390/2014 of 14 April 2014 establishing the 'Europe for Citizens' programme for the period 2014-2020 (OJ L 115 of 17.04.2014).OJ L 115, 17.4.2014, p. 3.

Following the Community Action Programme, which awarded grants in the field of active European citizenship from 2004 to 2006, the first fully-fledged citizenship programme under the name 'Europe for Citizens' was established, running from 2007 to 2013.

The current EfCP helps people to understand the EU, its history and diversity. It aims to support European citizenship and to improve conditions for civic and democratic participation at EU level. It is divided into **two strands**:

- Strand 1: European remembrance

- Strand 2: Democratic engagement and civic participation

The programme's general objectives are to:

- to contribute to citizens' understanding of the Union, its history and diversity;

- to foster European citizenship and to improve conditions for civic and democratic participation at Union level.

Its specific objectives are to:

- to raise awareness of remembrance, the common history and values of the Union and the Union's aim, namely to promote peace, the values of the Union and the well-being of its peoples by stimulating debate, reflection and the development of networks;

- to encourage democratic and civic participation of citizens at Union level, by developing citizens' understanding of the Union's policy-making process and promoting opportunities for societal and intercultural engagement and volunteering at Union level.

The programme is open to the EU Member States and other European countries, namely those from the Western Balkans provided that they sign an international agreement laying down the details of their respective participation in the programme. In 2017, the EfCP was implemented in 33 participating countries: 28 Member States and 5 other participating countries (Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia).[2]

The total EfCP budget for the period 2014-2020 is **EUR 187 718 000**. The budget provided for in the Regulation was initially EUR 185 468 000, but it was increased in 2014. This was due to the budgetary authority granting an additional EUR 2 000 000 and another EUR 250 000 being transferred from the cancelled preparatory project 'European Civil Society House'[3].

In the three years covered by this mid-term evaluation, the annual amount spent on operational appropriations was:

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[2]   The signature of the agreement on the participation of Kosovo* is foreseen for 2018 (*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence)

[3]   European Commission, Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs, Report on the activities of the 'Europe for Citizens Programme in 2014, Brussels, May 2015, EFCC/029/2015.

Year	Annual amount spent (EUR)
2014	22 688 003
2015	22 352 785
2016	22 765 895
Total 2014-2016	**67 806 683**

Source: DGHOME Annual Reports on EfCP activities 2014, 2015 and 2016

Strenghtening a shared sense of European identity and coming closer to European citizens and theMember States continue to be key objectives for the EU. The EfCP offered a unique forum to European citizens to express their ideas about current socio-political challenges and the future of Europe.

In its Resolution on the implementation of the EfCP programme for the period 2014–2020 of March 2017[4], the European Parliament called on the Commission, the Council and the Member States to consider to raise its budget under the next MFF. The European Economic and Social Committee came to similar conclusions in its opinion on "Financing of civil society organisations" adopted in October 2017.[5]

Description of the programme

The programme supports a wide range of activities and organisations promoting active European citizenship through the involvement of individual citizens. The two strands of the programme are complemented by a cross-cutting horizontal action for analysis, dissemination and use of the projects' results.

The programme has two funding mechanisms: action grants and operating grants. Action grants are provided for projects (those with a limited duration during which proposed specific activities are implemented) within both strands. Operating grants fund European public policy research organisations (think tanks) and European civil society organisations (CSOs). These grants provide financial support to cover part of the running costs that enable a body to exist independently and implement a range of activities envisaged in its annual work programme.

- *Strand 1: European remembrance*

This strand of work supports activities that reflect on European cultural diversity and on the EU's common values in the broadest sense. In this context, it aims to finance projects that reflect on the causes of totalitarian regimes in modern European history and to commemorate the victims of their crimes.

It also supports activities relating to other defining moments and reference points in recent European history. In particular, preference is given to projects which encourage tolerance, mutual understanding, intercultural dialogue and reconciliation as a means of moving beyond the past and building the future, with an emphasis on reaching the younger generation.

The projects under this strand (1) include different types of organisations (local authorities, CSOs, research institutes, etc.), or (2) develop different types of activities (research, non-formal education, public debates,

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[4]   European Parliament Resolution of 2 March 2017 on the implementation of Council Regulation (EU) No 390/2014 of 14 April 2014 establishing the 'Europe for Citizens' programme for the period 2014-2020 (2015/2329(INI)), P8_TA-PROV(2017)0063

[5]   European Economic and Social Committee: "Financing of Civil Society Organisations by the EU", own-initiative opinion by Jean Marc Roireau of 19 October 2017, EESC 2017, 01953.

exhibitions, etc.) or (3) involve citizens from different backgrounds. Projects should be implemented on a transnational level (involving the creation and operation of transnational partnerships and networks) or with a clear European dimension.

- *Strand 2: Democratic engagement and civic participation*

This strand supports activities relating to civic participation in the broadest sense with a particular focus on activities directly linked to EU policies. These activities aim to help shape the EU political agenda in areas related to the EfCP's objectives. The strand also covers projects and initiatives that develop opportunities for mutual understanding, intercultural learning, solidarity, civic engagement and volunteering at EU level.
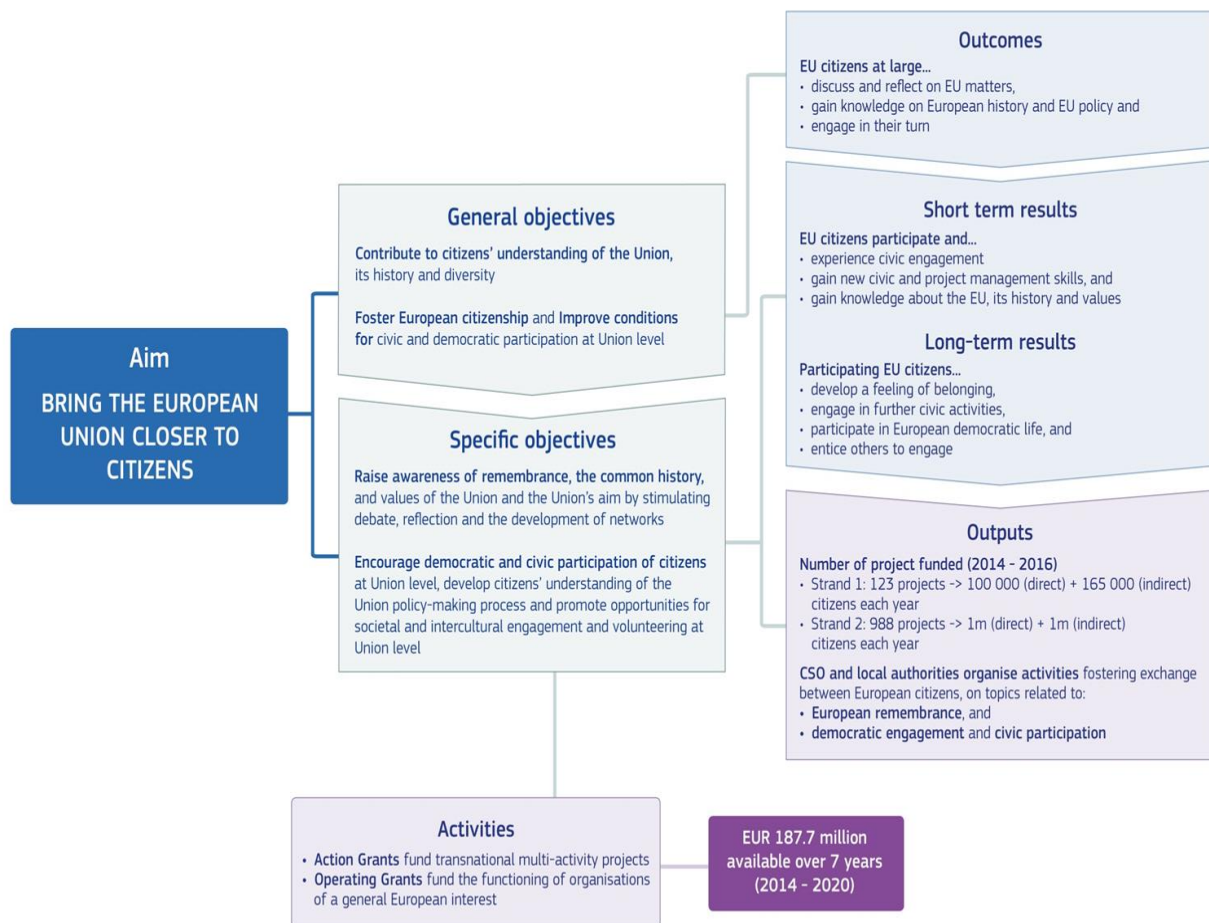
The following types of activities are supported under Strand 2:

- **Town twinning**: This measure supports projects that bring together a wide range of citizens from twinned towns to discuss topics in line with the programme's objectives. By mobilising citizens at local and EU level to debate concrete issues on the European political agenda, these projects seek to promote civic participation in the EU's policy-making processes and develop opportunities for civic engagement and volunteering at the EU level.

- **Networks of towns**: Municipalities or regions and associations working together on a common theme over the long term can develop networks of towns to make their cooperation more sustainable and to exchange good practice. Networks of towns organise activities around subjects of common interest in the context of the programme's objectives or multiannual priorities which are aimed at sustainability.

- **Civil society projects**: This measure supports projects promoted by transnational partnerships and networks that directly involve citizens. These projects bring together citizens from different backgrounds in activities aimed at giving them an opportunity to participate in shaping the EU's political agenda. As part of these projects citizens are invited to collaborate or debate the programme's multiannual priority themes at local and European levels.

- *Horizontal Action: Valorisation*

This action is about the dissemination of the programme's results and applies to both of the strands already mentioned. This action's main activity is the funding of the Europe for Citizens national contact points (ECPs) — appointed in Member States and participating countries. These provide advice to applicants, support searches for partners and disseminate programme information in the broadest sense.

The programme intervention logic is outlined in the graph below:

European Commission | THE EUROPE FOR CITIZENS PROGRAMME 2014-2020

Outcomes

EU citizens at large...
- discuss and reflect on EU matters,
- gain knowledge on European history and EU policy and
- engage in their turn

General objectives

Contribute to citizens' understanding of the Union, its history and diversity

Foster European citizenship and Improve conditions for civic and democratic participation at Union level

Short term results

EU citizens participate and...
- experience civic engagement
- gain new civic and project management skills, and
- gain knowledge about the EU, its history and values

Aim

BRING THE EUROPEAN UNION CLOSER TO CITIZENS

Long-term results

Participating EU citizens...
- develop a feeling of belonging,
- engage in further civic activities,
- participate in European democratic life, and
- entice others to engage

Specific objectives

Raise awareness of remembrance, the common history, and values of the Union and the Union's aim by stimulating debate, reflection and the development of networks

Encourage democratic and civic participation of citizens at Union level, develop citizens' understanding of the Union policy-making process and promote opportunities for societal and intercultural engagement and volunteering at Union level

Outputs

Number of project funded (2014 - 2016)
- Strand 1: 123 projects -> 100 000 (direct) + 165 000 (indirect) citizens each year
- Strand 2: 988 projects -> 1m (direct) + 1m (indirect) citizens each year

CSO and local authorities organise activities fostering exchange between European citizens, on topics related to:
- **European remembrance**, and
- **democratic engagement** and **civic participation**

Activities
- **Action Grants** fund transnational multi-activity projects
- **Operating Grants** fund the functioning of organisations of a general European interest

EUR 187.7 million available over 7 years (2014 - 2020)

Baseline and points of comparison

The mid-term evaluation assessed the EfCP performance starting from the situation described in the impact assessment for the programme 2014-2020[6] and in the ex post evaluation of the 2007-2013 programme[7]. These documents contained the baselines and main points of comparison for measuring the programme's achievements during the reporting period.

The impact assessment suggested a list of indicators which was later amended by the Regulation establishing the EfCP. Therefore, the indicators used for this evaluation are those provided for in the Regulation itself (see Annex III)[8].

On the **general objectives**, the Regulation does not provide for any indicator. However, the EfCP statement on operational expenditure attached to the annual draft general budget[9] uses the percentage of EU citizens

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[6]   Impact Assessment Accompanying the document: Proposal for a Regulation of the Council establishing for the period 2014-2020 the programme 'Europe for Citizens' to promote European citizenship SEC (2011) 1562 FINAL, Impact Assessment.

[7].   Ex post evaluation of the Europe for Citizens Programme 2007-2013 Final Report, http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/pdf/final_efcp_final_report_2015_10_15.pdf.

[8]   OJ L 115 of 17.04.2014.

[9]   Draft General Budget of the European Commission for the Financial Year 2018 - Working Document Part I - Programme statements of operational expenditure- COM (2017)400- May 2017.

feeling European based on Eurobarometer surveys[10] as the main indicator for measuring the programme's impact.

The baseline for this indicator was **59%** in the autumn of 2013. However it is difficult to determine the extent to which European citizens have a feeling of being European purely on the basis of Eurobarometer. It is also difficult to measure the programme's impact at the mid-term stage. Moreover, while the 2011 impact assessment was 'superseded' by the Regulation, it contained long-term and medium-term targets which were more helpful for measuring the programme's impact: enhanced capacity of civil society to influence the European project, contributions to the European Years in the form of intellectual input or activities to link the Years with the local and regional realities and contributions to political platforms in the run-up to European elections 2014-2019. These targets were translated into the general and specific objectives of the Regulation.

Impact assessment indicators[11]	Targets 2020	Baseline 2013
EU citizens now feel European	Stable at 59%	59%
Number and quality of initiatives promoted by citizens' organisations with a view to: **- have an impact on the EU policy making process** **- strengthen cohesion in Society** **- enhance the understanding of the role of the EU**	Strengthened capacity of civil society to influence the European project Contributions to the European Years [12]in the form of intellectual input or activities to link the Years with the current local and regional experiences Contributions to political platforms in the run-up to European elections 2014-2019.	No baseline established

On the **specific objectives**, the performance indicators used are those provided for in the Regulation establishing the programme. The baselines 2013 for both strands are presented in the tables below:

Strand 1

EfCP 2014 – 2020 Regulation performance indicators	Impact assessment impact indicators / targets in medium term	Baseline 2013
Indicator 1: the number of participants who are directly involved	none	100 000
Indicator 2: the number of persons indirectly reached by the Programme	none	150 000
Indicator 3: the number of projects	Increase of projects by at least 80 %.	31

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10 Between 2012 and 2016, the Eurobarometer produced results on the question 'Do you feel like an EU citizen' twice per year (in spring & autumn). Only results of autumn are shown. For full results see: http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Chart/getChart/themeKy/50/groupKy/263.
11 See footnote 6.
12 See: https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/european-years_en

Indicator 4: the quality of the project applications and the degree to which the results of selected projects can be further used / transferred	none	Lowest score obtained by a retained project: 80/ 100 Number of events organised: 50
Indicator 5: percentage of first-time applicants	33% approx. (depending on action and year) Minimum 15% of first-time beneficiaries across the board	40%

Strand 2

EfCP 2014 – 2020 Regulation performance indicators	Impact assessment impact indicators / targets in medium term	Baseline 2013
Indicator 1: the number of participants who are directly involved	Minimum 600 000 per year	1 000 000
Indicator 2: the number of persons indirectly reached by the Programme	5 million people	1 000 000
Indicator 3: the number of participating organisations	2000 per year	1 000
Indicator 4: the perception of the Union and its institutions by the beneficiaries	none	77%[13] feel more European as result of participating in the EfCP
Indicator 5: the quality of the project applications	none	Lowest score obtained by a retained project:71/ 100
Indicator 6: percentage of first-time applicants	33 % approx. (depending on action and year) Minimum 15% of first-time beneficiaries across the board	40%
Indicator 7: number of transnational partnerships including different types of stakeholders	Increase by 5%	1.3
Indicator 8: number of Networks of towns	Increase by 50%	41
Indicator 9: the number and quality of policy initiatives following-up on activities supported by the Programme at the local or European level	Baseline to be established by new programme	0*

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[13] This percentage was established in the study 'Measuring the impact of the Europe for Citizens Programme', Euréval/PPMI, May 2013, http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/pdf/final_report_efc_may_2013_eurevalppmi.pdf

EfCP 2014 – 2020 Regulation performance indicators	Impact assessment impact indicators / targets in medium term	Baseline 2013
Indicator 10: the geographical coverage of the activities: **(i) the comparison between the percentage of projects submitted by one Member State as a lead partner and the percentage of its population in the total population of the Union** **(ii) the comparison between the percentage of projects selected per Member State as a lead partner and the percentage of its population in the total population of the Union** **(iii) the comparison between the percentage of projects submitted by one Member State as a lead partner or co- partner and the percentage of its population in the total population of the Union** **(iv) the comparison between the percentage of projects selected per Member State as a lead partner or co-partner and the percentage of its population in the total population of the Union.**	At least one project per country	Number of Member States with appropriate national coverage (NC)[14]: (i) submitting as lead partner (13) (ii) selected as a lead partner (12) (iii) submitting as lead partner or co-partner (18) (iv) selected as a lead partner or co-partner (15)

*= *It was intended that a baseline would be set as well for the quality of initiatives, but none have been set so far as it has proven difficult to have a proportionate and accurate reporting mechanisms on this indicator*

The progress made during the period covered by the mid-term evaluation compared to the 2013 baselines are presented in Section 3 (see State of play).

Follow-up on the ex post evaluation report of the 2007-2013 programme

The mid-term evaluation also examined the follow-up action on the **recommendations of the ex post evaluation report of the 2007-2013** programme[15]. The report confirmed the relevance of the programme's objectives and activities and recognised its uniqueness. However, it pointed out that the programme needed to make improvements on a number of issues which could increase its impact, added value, effectiveness and efficiency in delivering results.

The report recommended that the programme's impact be maximised at a wider level, with its relatively small budget being leveraged by identifying specific areas where it can add the most value. The report also recommended that the programme complement larger initiatives.

Potential beneficiaries should be requested to deliver **follow-up action to demonstrate the EU added value** of the programme, which is to be assessed based on a set of criteria to be developed. The report

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[14] As explained in the monitoring document from EACEA, the NC is calculated as a percentage of projects submitted (or selected) per Member State as a lead partner (or co-partner) divided by the percentage of its population in the total population of the EU. Geographical coverage at EU level is the number of Member States for which 90% < NC < 110%.

[15] Ex post evaluation 2007-2013 report, (ibid).

recommended improving monitoring by **introducing more standardised monitoring provisions for projects** (e.g. that help beneficiaries distinguish between individuals reached) and **integrating indicators** to be developed as part of a study on the monitoring system, commissioned through the programme.

On **remembrance projects** the Commission was invited to encourage potential participants **to demonstrate the links between past, present and future** in funding applications and take them into account as part of the scoring process.

The report also highlighted the need **to improve the communication between DGs** to maximise synergies and use good practices developed by other EU programmes on citizenship to reduce overlaps.

On the geographic balance, it called **for increased support for first-time applicants and unrepresented Member States. ECPs should also be more involved in the programme and** their collaboration with the central programme management should increase.

The report also pointed out that the budget used for funding CSOs, which could plausibly benefit from EU funding from other sources, could be **more effectively spent on projects that are more citizen-centric**, and/or ensuring that CSO-led projects were comprised of strong citizen-centric components.

Considering the scale of the problems falling within the programme's scope in light of its relatively small budget and the myriad of demographic, social and cultural factors affecting citizenship and civic engagement, the report recommended that there should be a **greater strategic focus on the target audiences.** It also made recommendations on the **types of activies and guidance for applicants/ beneficiaries** to increase the EfCP's ability to provide value for money.

These recommendations were either integrated into the Regulation establishing the current programme and in the annual work programmes or translated into technical implementation measures and included in the guidelines for applicants to projects calls launched by the Education, Audio-visual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) (see under programme management).

In particular:

- The programme's scope was narrowed and its strands reduced from four to two, so that it could deploy its limited funding more strategically and focus on citizen-centred activities.

- Thematic priorities were introduced in the annual work programmes to focus on current issues of relevance to European citizens (i.e. migration, Euroscepticism).

- A study was launched to improve programme and project monitoring which aimed to develop a list of indicators to be integrated by the contractors for project evaluation.

- Strengthened measures for monitoring projects (incl. desk monitoring) were introduced to support their implementation and to strengthen their EU added value. An annual monitoring strategy plan has been set up which establishes the criteria for selecting the projects to be monitored.

- The final report form was simplified and revised in order to gather measurable information and to enable results to be better used. Beneficiaries were also requested to report on specific themes (e.g. the future of Europe) and some organisations who received grants started 'clustering' among each other in order to increase the project's impact and its EU-wide dimension.

- For Member States less represented in the programme, 'ad hoc' visits to and participation to info-days were organised (e.g. in Baltic countries). Ad hoc training to ECP staff and job-shadowing initiatives were also put in place.

- The budget allocated to the EfCP in 2017 for operating grants is less than 30% of the total budget which means that 70% is allocated to citizen-centric projects.

- DG HOME maintained close contacts with other DGs with responsibility for citizenship issues that are implementing funding programmes over the 2014-2020 period.

Those recommendations not yet addressed will be considered in the future implementation of the programme.

3. IMPLEMENTATION / STATE OF PLAY

Programme management

After the Juncker Commission was established, the responsibility for the citizenship portfolio was given to the Commissioner in charge of migration, home affairs and citizenship. Accordingly, the EfCP was moved from Directorate-General Communication (DG COMM) to Directorate-General Migration and Home Affairs (DG HOME) as of 1 January 2015.

DG HOME manages the budget and sets priorities, targets and criteria for the programme after consultation of the Programme Committee. Furthermore, it guides and monitors the general implementation, follow-up and evaluation of the programme at European level.

The Education, Audio-visual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) is responsible for implementing the programme. The Agency is notably in charge of selecting projects and signing grant decisions and agreements, financial management, monitoring projects, communicating with beneficiaries and spot checks.

Member States implement the programme through the Programme Committee. The Committee is consulted on different implementation aspects, in particular the proposed annual work programme, and is informed on the annual reports of activities and the selection results. Non-EU participating countries take part in the Programme Committee as observers, but without any voting rights.

Every year the Commission presents an annual report on the activities of the EfCP to the Programme Committee so Member States can have the opportunity to review its implementation according to the annual work programme. The annual reports for the years 2014, 2015 and 2016 were analysed under the mid-term evaluation[16].

State of play

The purpose of this section is to present the state of play of the programme's implementation and the qualitative and quantitative results achieved in the period 2014-2016 in general terms and by each strand. Baselines and milestones set up on the basis of the Regulation for 2017 and 2020 are also included.

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[16] DG HOME, Europe for Citizens Programme Annual report 2014, 2015 and 2016.

General objectives

General objectives: to contribute to citizens' understanding of the Union, its history and diversity, to foster European citizenship and to improve conditions for civic and democratic participation at Union level						
Indicators	Baseline 2013	2014	2015	2016	Target 2017	Target 2020
EU citizens now feel European	59% (Eurobarometer 80-Autumn 2013)	60% (Eurobarometer82 -Autumn 2014)	64% (Eurobarometer 84-Autumn 2015)	67% (Eurobarometer 86-Autumn 2016)	59%	59%

The review of recent Eurobarometer surveys shows that the percentage of EU citizens who definitely or to some extent feel that they are EU citizens slightly increased between 2013 and 2016. While this is a positive development, it is not possible to establish whether the programme caused this increase, as many factors influence the feeling of being an EU citizen besides the programme.

As noted in Section 2, to highlight the achievement of the programme's general objectives based on the quantity and quality of the initiative, the impact assessment sets out three long-term targets and milestones. The EfCP performance in relation to these was evaluated as follows:

- *Strengthened capacity of civil society to influence the European project* . The programme is on track as demonstrated by its potential contribution to attaining this target, for instance through civil society projects that encourage citizens to participate in the community and take interest in decision-making processes

- *Contributions to the European Years in the form of intellectual input or activities to link the Years with the local and regional experiences.* The European Year 2014 was focused on citizens and continued some of the activities of the European Year of Citizens 2013, with an emphasis on the EU elections. Due to the late adoption of the Programme for the 2014-2020 period, its contribution to the European Year could only have been limited. There is no evidence of the EfCP contributing to the European Year for Development in 2015, although it is briefly mentioned in the EfCP's annual work programme for 2015 as a potential topic under the priority of the debate on the future of Europe. There were no European Years in 2016 or 2017.

- *Contributions to political platforms in the run-up to European elections 2014 and 2019.* Given the late adoption of the programme in April 2014, projects in line with the annual priority for Strand 2 built around the European Parliament elections and citizens' participation in the democratic life of the EU, were not in place by the time of the June 2014 elections. However, the debate on the future of Europe is a permanent priority of Strand 2 and can also contribute to greater interest in European issues such as the EU elections.

Specific objective 1

Specific objective 1 to raise awareness of remembrance, the common history and values of the Union's aim, namely promote peace, the values of the Union and the well-being of its peoples, by stimulating debate, reflection and the development of networks						
Indicators	Baseline 2013	2014	2015	2016	Target 2017	Target 2020
1. number of participants who are directly involved	100 000	100 000	100 000	100 000	100 000	100 000

2. number of persons indirectly reached by the Programme	150 000	165 000	185 000	190 000	180 000 (or an increase of 20%)	202 500 (35% increase)
3. number of projects	31	36	33	38	35	36
4. quality of the project applications and degree to which the results of selected projects can be further used/transferred (lowest score obtained by a retained project and number of events organised)	80/100 50	84.5/100 84	80/100 90	82.5/100 95	81.6/100	83.2
5. percentage of first-time applicants	40%	43%	45%	50%	at least 40% of new applicants	Between 35 and 45% first-time applicants per year

For Strand 1, the table above summarises the programme's actual performance for the reporting period against the indicators set out in the Regulation establishing the programme. Most of the targets were exceeded in 2016 and the programme appears to be on track to reach the targets set for 2020.

The number of direct participants stabilised at 100 000 per year between 2014 and 2016 while the number of people indirectly reached by the programme increased by 27%.

On the number of projects funded, the target was already exceeded in 2014 compared to the 2013 baseline (from 31 to 38). This trend was confirmed in 2016. Even if this increase is not significant, it demonstrates an increased interest in these types of projects, which could also be attributed to the introduction of annual priorities. The target set in the impact assessment (an increase of 80%) was not achieved, but it should be highlighted that this target was fixed before the overall programme budget was reduced in the new programming period.

The quality of project applications on average increased slightly compared to the 2013 target (82.5/100 points in 2016 compared to the required 80/100).

First-time applicants made up 50% of total applicants in 2016, exceeding the target set by the baseline (40%). Therefore, the impact assessment target (minimum 15%) was comfortably exceeded by mid-term.

Specific objective 2

Specific objective 2 to encourage the democratic and civic participation of citizens at Union level, by developing citizen understanding of the Union policy-making process and promoting opportunities for societal and intercultural engagement and volunteering at Union level					
Indicators	**Baseline 2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**Target 2017**	**Target 2020**
1. number of participants who are directly	1 000 000	1 000 000	1 000 000	1 000 000	1 000 000	1 200 000

involved						
2. number of persons indirectly reached by the programme	1 000 000	1 100 000	1 100 000	1 100 000	1 200 000 (or an increase of 20%)	1 350 000 (or an increase of 35%)
3. number of participating organisations	1000	1100	1300	1550	1 400	1 700
4. feel more European as a result of their participation in the Europe for Citizens programme	77% (Eureval/PPMI Study, May 2013)	60%[17] (Euro barometer82-Autumn 2014)	64% (Euro barometer84-Autumn 2015)	67% (Euro barometer86Autumn 2016)	stable at 77%	stable at 77%
5. quality of the project applications (lowest score obtained by a retained project)	71/100	53/100	74/100	73/100	at least 72.4/100	73.9
6. percentage of first-time applicants	40%	40%	44%	53%	at least 40% new applicants	5%<40%<+5%
7. number of transnational partnerships including different types of stakeholders (average number of types stakeholders)	1.3	1.6	1.8	1.8	at least 2 types of stakeholders in transnational partnerships.	At least 2 types of stakeholders
8. number of Networks of towns	41	35	32	30	35	42
9. number and quality of policy initiatives	0*	0	0	0	The target for 2017 of 2 follow-up policy	2

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[17] Since no measurement was done, results for 2014, 2015 and 2016 are those of the annual Eurobarometers 'Percentage of feeling European'. In the public consultation of 2017, stakeholders answered positively to the question 'do you feel more European as a result of your participation in the Europe for Citizens programme' (32 respondents out of 40). However, this sample cannot be considered as representative.

following-up on activities supported by the Programme at local or European level					initiatives at local of European level. According to the EfCP management, the monitoring was not possible for this indicator, thus it is unclear if the target was achieved or not.	
10. geographical coverage of the activities: (i) the comparison between the percentage of projects submitted by one Member State as a lead partner and the percentage of its population in the total population of the Union Number of Member States with appropriate national coverage (NC)[18] -submitting as a lead partner:	13		28	27	The targets for 2017 have been achieved in 2016: (26)	(28)
(ii) the comparison between the percentage of projects selected per Member State as a lead partner and the percentage of its						

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18 See footnote 14.

population in the total population of the Union					
--selected as a lead partner:	12		27	27	(26)	(28)
(iii) the comparison between the percentage of projects submitted by one Member State as a lead partner or co-partner and the percentage of its population in the total population of the Union					
--submitting as a lead partner or co-partner:	18		28	28	(26)	(28)
(iv) the comparison between the percentage of projects selected per Member State as a lead partner or co-partner and the percentage of its population in the total population of the Union.					
-selected as a lead partner or co-partner:	15		28	28	(26)	(28)

*= *It was intended that a baseline would be set as well for the quality of initiatives, but none have been set so far as it has proven difficult to have proportionate and accurate reporting mechanisms on this indicator*

For Strand 2, while the number of participants who are directly involved in the programme remained stable and in line with the 2013 level, the number of indirect participants has increased by 10%. Although the impact assessment's medium-term target of five million has not been achieved, the programme has been successful in engaging a growing number of indirect participants.

The programme has successfully included a large number of organisations and is over-performing in relation to this target. The number of organisations participating in projects has consistently increased to reach an increment of 35% compared to 2013 baseline.

The programme is over-achieving on the target for new beneficiaries in 2016 by a very large margin (from 40% to 53% in 2016). Strand 2 activities appear attractive to newcomers, as more than half of the applicants in 2016 were applying for the first time[19].

The monitoring data also indicates an increase in multi-member partnerships and networks since 2013. The project quality has also increased since 2015 exceeding the 71/100 target from the 2013 baseline (73/100 in 2016).

Another indicator is the number of *'participants feeling more European as a result of their participation in the Europe for Citizens programme'*. Until now no opinion poll has been carried out and the only data available refer to the results of the Eurobarometer 'EU citizens now feel European'. In the survey carried out for the external study, the strongest effect that was felt from participating in programme activities was that participants wanted to get more involved in civil society activities after taking part in the programme. A significant number also claimed that they had learnt more about Europe, its history and culture, while slightly less felt any more European after participating in the programme[20].

On the other hand, the number of networks of towns which have been supported by the programme has decreased since 2013 (from 41 to 30 in 2016) and is falling short of achieving the 2017 targets (see in section 5 under Efficiency). The programme is also underachieving in fostering policy initiatives that follow up on activities supported by the programme at local or EU level since 2016; there is no indication of such initiatives, as it has not been possible to put proportionate reporting and monitoring mechanisms into place.

On the geographical coverage, the number of Member States with appropriate national coverage has been constantly increasing and in fact doubled compared to 2013 situation in relation to both applications and selected projects. While the impact assessment target of one funded project per country was not reached as of 2016, it should be highlighted that the target for 2020, referenced in EACEA's monitoring document has been revised to include organisations from 28 countries selected either as lead or co-partners. This means that the future target would be achieved.

Horizontal action

The main activity covered by the Horizontal Action was the funding of information structures in Member States and participating countries - the **ECPs**. These organisations provide advice to applicants, support partner search and disseminate information on the programme. The ECPs have been effective in their role and are helpful in providing assistance to potential applicants to the EfCP,[21] as also stressed by the European Parliament's Resolution on the implementation of the EfCP Regulation[22].

A financial contribution to institutional communication about the political priorities of the Union (related to the programme general objectives) was also provided once in 2014 for an amount of 250 000 EUR. The Horizontal action has also supported a variety of events relevant to the two strands, as well as the development and maintenance of dissemination tools such as a website /Citizenship Portal, a platform for project results (VALOR) and a newsletter. An annual Holocaust Remembrance Day was organised by DG

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[19] EACEA monitoring data.
[20] Deloitte report, Mid-term evaluation of the Europe for Citizens Programme 2014-2020, Final Report, September 2017, Figure 38:"Effects of participation in EfCP-funded activities"(n=40)
http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/pdf/dg_home_efcp_final_report_finalised_en.pdf
[21]   Deloitte report, Annex B, Web-based survey results
[22]   See footnote 4

HOME throughout the reviewed period, involving organisations active in the area of European remembrance, ECPs and Commission staff. This recurring commemoration represents an interesting opportunity to bring together key stakeholders and to disseminate further the programme's message on remembrance.

4. METHOD

The evaluation process was supported by an external evaluator (Deloitte in cooperation with Coffey)[23], under DG HOME's responsibility

The criteria used for the evaluation include relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the programme and EU added value. The evaluation methodology relied on a series of methodological tools:

- desk research of relevant documents;

- interviews with 14 EU officials and 4 members of the Programme Committee, as well as with 4 operating grant beneficiaries;

- a web-based survey in English targeting both beneficiaries and unsuccessful applicants;

- a workshop with 20 members of the Civil Dialogue Group (CDG);[24]

- three online focus groups with a total of 17 Europe for Citizens Contact Points (ECPs);

- 20 case studies[25] of projects funded under both strands; and

- analysis of the results of a public consultation about the mid-term evaluation of the EfCP 2014-2020 run by the European Commission between January and April 2017.

Based on this methodology, the indicators for measuring outcomes (in complying with the general objectives) contained in the impact assessment for the 2014-2020 programme were used. Therefore the contribution of the EfCP to its objectives was assessed in qualitative and quantitative terms.

Limitations and robustness of findings

The Commission considers the evaluation's findings and conclusions as credible and consistent according to the evaluator's methodology. There were some challenges which by their nature could not always be mitigated. Some indicators in the Regulation were difficult to use for assessing the programme's performance because they were not always directly comparable.

To make sure that the evaluation results were reliable, in the absence of suitable indicators to assess performance in the EfCP Regulation, the extent to which the programme's activities effectively contributed to its general objectives was assessed based on the indicators from the impact assessment. On the other hand comparison between targets was difficult due to the diversity and the number of the actions funded. There were no straightforward baselines for all indicators either, which made it difficult to make extensive use of the monitoring data collected.

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[23] Mid-term evaluation of the Europe for Citizens Programme 2014-2020, Final Report, September 2017. http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/pdf/dg_home_efcp_final_report_finalised_en.pdf

[24] The Civil Dialogue Group discusses all matters relating to the EfCP and to its implementation.This dialogue involves regular meetings between the Commission and approximately 50 key European organisations actively involved in the programme.

[25] Deloitte report, Annex B, Case studies

Despite this limitation, the number of projects funded and the number of direct and indirect participants between 2014 and 2016, when taken together with the evidence of the quality of the initiatives, suggests that the programme has contributed to the achievement of the general objectives.

Reporting data were sometimes different as in the case of the figures reported in the DG HOME annual reports compared to activities reports available on the programme's webpage (i.e. list of beneficiairies, budget awarded). This was mainly due to adjustments in the projects implementation (i.e. following the cancellation of a contract). The evaluation report only referred to figures included in the DG HOME activity reports.

The web-survey results were not fully representative of each profile as only 5 responses were from unsuccessful applicants despite the efforts made by the Commission and EACEA to promote the survey on their webpages and social media. Since many beneficiaries were also unsuccessful applicants in the past (as indicated by the number of applications they submitted and how many were accepted), it is likely that respondents preferred to answer as beneficiaries rather than unsuccessful applicants. Whenever the questions to beneficiaries and unsuccessful applicants were identical, those replies were merged.

On public consultation, since individual citizens were scarce among the respondents, results need to be interpreted with caution.

Even though the case studies proved to be a useful tool to get a better picture of the programme's activities, it was not possible to draw definitive conclusions based only on the case studies selected as their representativeness of the programme as a whole was somewhat limited.

5. ANALYSIS AND ANSWERS TO THE EVALUATION QUESTIONS

A number of evaluation questions were addressed to assess the programme's relevance, effectiveness and sustainability, efficiency, coherence and EU dimension over the period 2014-2016.

These questions were analysed based on the evidence collected by the external study, which supports this mid-term evaluation, and the feedback provided by main programme stakeholders (participants, organisations, think tanks, NGOs, ECPs, and citizens) through the public consultation launched by DG HOME.

Relevance

•   *To what extent the programme's activities are still relevant in contributing to citizens' understanding of the EU, its history and diversity?*

The activities conducted under Strand 1 are considered as appropriate for achieving the programme's objectives, in particular those encouraging reflection on European cultural diversity and on common values in the broadest sense, initiatives to reflect on the causes of totalitarian regimes in Europe's modern history and to commemorate the victims of their crimes and activities concerning other defining moments and reference points in recent European history.

Stakeholders consultations consistently highlighted the programme's relevance (see Annex 2). CDG members, grant beneficiaries and EU officials claimed that the programme is more important than ever.

The relevance of these activities was supported by stakeholders responding to the public consultation as part of the evaluation study: 91% of 322 respondents stated that remembrance activities were

'very important' (57%) or 'rather important' (34%)[26]. ECPs also claimed that the stronger focus on European history in this programme, compared to the previous one, is appreciated by many organisations, institutions and municipalities in their countries.

Moreover, a large majority of ECPs agreed that the current structure of the programme achieves an appropriate balance between past and present since both aspects are very closely linked and the lessons learnt from the past are essential for a healthy debate on the EU's future.

- ***To what extent the programme's activities are still relevant to foster European citizenship and to improve conditions for civic and democratic participation at EU level?***

  The activities under Strand 2 are considered as relevant overall to the programme objectives by all consulted stakeholders. Even if certain stakeholders (operating grant beneficiaries and ECPs[27]) think that some activities under **town twinning** and **networks of towns** have less relevance or European dimension, the public consultation's results illustrate that town twinning is positive overall. 56% of respondents stated that it is very important for EU action and 33% stating that it is important[28]. It should also be taken into account that an EU dimension is not required for these activities, as Annex 1 to the Regulation makes clear. However the external evaluation study showed a preference of the stakeholders for that EU dimension as gathered from the analysis of case studies and reinforced by consultations. Moreover, the European Parliament in its recent report on the programme's implementation stressed the importance and the proven value of the existing international twinning of cities and municipalities[29].

  The feedback on the relevance of **networks of towns** is mostly positive. Most respondents to the public consultation stated that networks of towns are very important (61%) or important (35%) for EU action[30].

  The relevance of **civil society projects** to the programme's objectives was highlighted and demonstrated by case studies in particular for having a strong focus on educating citizens on EU topics and for encouraging them to participate in policy discussions. Most respondents to the public consultation stated that civil society projects are very important (74%) or important (24%)[31]. Civil society projects were highlighted by half of the ECPs in one focus group as projects that need more funding when compared to others.

- ***In how far were the objectives relevant to the problems to be addressed?***

  The programme's objectives were set out taking into account the needs to be addressed by the EfCP and in particular those included in the impact assessment for the 2014-2020 programme[32]:

  - level of trust of EU citizens in the EU;

  - level of the sense of belonging citizens feel in the EU;

  - Euroscepticism;

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[26]. DG HOME, mid-term evaluation EfCP, public consultation results.
[27] See Annex 2, Stakeholder consultation.
[28]. DG HOME mid-term evaluation EfCP, public consultation results
[29]. European Parliament Report on the implementation of Council Regulation (EU) No 390/2014 of 14 April establishing the 'Europe for Citizens' programme for the period 2014-2020 (2015/2328(INI)),
[30]. DG HOME mid-term evaluation EfCP, public consultation results.
[31]. (ibid).
[32]. Impact assessment for 2014-2020 EfCP programme, 2011, see footnote 4, data source: Eurobarometer.

- reduced interest in EU matters (evidenced by EU elections voter turnout)

Overall, the responses in the Eurobarometer surveys between 2014-2016 on the feeling of trust in the EU and on the sense of being an EU citizen do not differ much from the surveys before the programme (i.e. 33% and 26% citizens as of spring 2016 compared to 41% and 23% respectively as of spring 2011). This highlights that intervention is **continually needed in this area**. Furthermore, the programme's objectives were also considered to be relevant and up-to-date by most of the ECPs consulted.

On the issues of Euroscepticism and interest in EU matters, Euroscepticism has evidently risen over the last few years as well as the increasing political presence of parties sceptical of the EU or protest parties. The voter turnout in the EU elections 2014 was the lowest ever recorded (42.61%) as many citizens consider the EU 'too distant or 'too interfering in their day-to-day lives' and are unsure of how the EU improves their lives.

Therefore, in these challenging times, to bring the EU closer to its citizens it is considerably important to raise their awareness of EU citizens' rights, encourage debate and reflect on citizens' understanding of the EU. The Commission recognised it as a phenomenon for discussion, debate and action in the White Paper on the Future of Europe[33].

Effectiveness and sustainability

- *To what extent have the activities undertaken in the framework of Europe for Citizens been effective in achieving the programme's general and specific objectives? Where objectives are not fulfilled in a satisfactory way, which factors have hindered the programme's effectiveness and to what extent? Is the Europe for Citizens programme on the right track at this stage of its implementation?*

Between 2014 and 2016, the number of participants and projects funded suggest that the programme has contributed to achieving the general objectives.

In quantitative terms, **352 projects per year** were supported on average, involving at least **1.1 million direct participants** and reached an additional **1.3 million indirectly** every year[34]. The total number of participants at mid-term for both strands was **3.3 million direct** and **3.9 million indirect participants**[35]. This level of participation exceeds the previous EfCP's achievements, which managed to reach (directly and indirectly) close to 7 million citizens from across the EU in its second half between 2011 and 2013, but which had more funds available[36].

Between April 2014 and July 2017, **3 950** CSOs[37] were involved in the programme, i.e. on average more than 1 300 each year. The number of CSOs participating in the reporting period is slightly lower than the **4 250 CSOs** which participated between 2011 and 2013, but it has been increasing consistently each year. This suggests that the target of **1 700 CSOs per year by 2020**[38] is likely to be achieved and that the programme is encouraging cooperation among CSOs by bringing a significant number together.

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[33] White Paper on the Future of Europe, Reflections and scenarios for EU 27 by 2025, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/white_paper_on_the_future_of_europe_en.pdf
[34] Monitoring programme data, provided by EACEA.
[35] (ibid).
[36] The programme's budget was reduced by 12.7% between programming periods.
[37] Monitoring programme data, provided by EACEA
[38] Indicator 3 in the Working Programme Statement, see Draft General Budget of the European Commission for the Financial Year 2018- Working Document Part I- Programme statements of operational expenditure- COM (2017)400- May 2017.

In qualitative terms, external factors such as the different political, economic and social situation in different EU Member States made it difficult to measure EfCP's effectiveness in achieving its general and specific objectives as these factors could have influenced the programme's impact in terms of awareness, understanding and civic engagement. Measurement during or immediately after an activity provides only a snapshot and does not provide information on long-term change in citizens' behaviour. Nevertheless, the tables on the programme implementation indicate that progress has been achieved on the quality side.

The way in which individual citizens were involved (bottom-up approach) is also seen as one of the programme's strength.

The continuing increase of the average score obtained by the projects selected for funding between 2013 and 2016 shows their increasing quality. This can partly be explained by the fact that the projects submitted have become more focused and concrete following the introduction of annual priorities. Results of case studies also confirmed that activities are well anchored in current political and societal issues.[39]

However, even if the review of recent Eurobarometer surveys (presented under 'Relevance') shows that the percentage of EU citizens who definitely or to some extent feel that they are EU citizens slightly increased between 2013 and 2016, it is not possible to establish a direct causal link between the programme and this positive development as already stated above.

On the specific objectives, evidence shows that under Strand 1, the EfCP has made progress on achieving its specific objectives. The key target relevant for Strand 1 was to increase the number of projects by 80% in view of a slightly larger budget and a strengthening of remembrance activities. Since the overall programme budget was decreased in the current programming period, the target could not be achieved but an increase of 27% was registered in 2016 compared to the baseline (from 31 projects to 38). The number of first-time beneficiaries per year of Strand 1 in 2016 was 58%, and the key target of at least 15% referenced in the 2011 Impact Assessment was exceeded at mid-term.

For Strand 2, the specific objective 'encouraging democratic engagement and civic participation' exceeded its targets in terms of the number of people reached (directly and indirectly) and first-time participants. In particular, it is fairly successful in indirectly reaching participants and the number of organisations participating is encouraging. The target to have at least one project funded per country could be achieved in the future as it was revised in 2016 to include organisations selected as co-partners. However, the geographical balance in town twinning should be improved as the reports on annual activities for 2015 and 2016 indicates that over 50% of selected projects came from only four Member States as coordinators (Germany, Hungary, Italy and Slovakia).

For the Horizontal Action, the objective of building up a strategy for dissemination of best practices and programme results has been effective as demonstrated by high-level events on Holocaust remembrance[40]. The online database VALOR also contributed to raising awareness about the programme through dissemination of projects' results. However, a more strategic approach should be developed based on an overarching communication and dissemination strategy at central and local

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[39] Examples of case studies can be found in Deloitte report, Section 4.2

[40] See before under section 3, Programme implementation, State of play

level, also supported by stakeholders and the European Parliament.[41]

The CDG and ECPs have a lot of experience in dealing with CSOs and in sharing best practices with their counterparts in the Member States and centrally with European bodies and institutions. In order to maximise the programme's impact on citizens and improve synergies with other programmes/activities at European and national level, mechanisms should be set up to guarantee a more structured discussion between all parties involved. In particular, the CDG asked for a more structured and open dialogue and more political orientation.

The ECPs have been effective in their role as information providers and in providing assistance to potential applicants to the EfCP. However, there are areas where the effectiveness of their action could be improved, such as on the application procedure. Half of the respondents to the web-based survey had not used the ECPs for the review of their application or for partner search. Among the reasons for not using their services, survey respondents noted that the ECP network had not been advertised enough or that they thought they did not need any help.

Providing feedback to unsuccessful applicants who would prefer to have more detail on the reason for their project being rejected is an issue which was also highlighted by the European Parliament in its Resolution from March 2017 on the implementation of the EfCP Regulation, which stated that 'rejected applications should be responded to satisfactorily'.

VALOR, which contains information on EfCP-funded projects, could be more user-friendly in order to allow a better exploitation of programme results. Robust methods should be developed for widely disseminating programme results and making them more highly visible, as requested by interviewed beneficiaries and by the European Parliament. [42]

Dissemination activities contributed to raising awareness about the programme, but there is scope for a more strategic approach, in order to upgrade the overall communication of the EfCP at central and local level. Despite the satisfaction of stakeholders with the majority of activities funded through the Horizontal Action, the potential of activities has yet to be fully exploited and the role of ECPs could be reinforced.

• ***How does the programme influence the town twinning movement, European civil society organisations, think tanks and remembrance organisations participating in the programme?***

The participation of CSOs, the town twinning movement, think tanks and other organisations in the programme influences their perception of Europe and feeling European. Data from the public consultation show that the effect felt most strongly by participants resulting from their involvement in the programme was that they wanted to become more engaged with civic society (58%). It is also noteworthy that a large proportion of the respondents who had participated in programme activities claimed that their knowledge of Europe increased thanks to their participation.

• ***Does participation in the programme appear satisfactory in terms of the balance between new organisations and those which have received support previously?***

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[41] Report on the implementation of Council Regulation (EU) No 390/2014 of 14 April 2014 establishing the 'Europe for Citizens' programme for the period 2014–2020 (2015/2329(INI)), Committee on Culture and Education, Rapporteur: María Teresa Giménez Barbat

[42] (ibid)

The data on first-time beneficiaries suggest that the programme is successfully reaching out to new audiences by attracting both new beneficiaries and larger, more transnational partnerships[43]. The proportion of **first time applicants** has been rising and averaged 46%. In 2016, the proportion of **new beneficiaries** for Strand 1 was 58% and for Strand 2: 73% for Town-Twinning, 90% for Networks of Towns, and 84% for Civil Society Projects.

- *To what extent has the Europe for Citizens programme been successful in delivering sustainable outcomes in relation to its objectives*?

At the mid-point of the programming period, the programme has delivered sustainable outcomes in relation to its objectives. This was due to the fact that projects created long-lasting relationships between partners who often find face-to-face interactions easier to recall and who want to continue to engage in further civic activities. As a result networks of towns were set up and follow-up events were organised between the same beneficiaries after initial events allowing for activities/projects to continue after funding. Beneficiaries felt that they increased their knowledge and exchanged experience with European partners. However, not all activities are long-lasting: some of them are also 'one-off' such as events/meetings whose purpose is also to strengthen the exchange of experience by focusing on social and cultural aspects (see town twinning). Nevertheless, the success of the city twinning projects all over the EU remains evident as recognised by the European Parliament itself that called on the Member States to promote the scheme among municipalities and to enable cooperation.

Efficiency

- *How efficient were the activities undertaken in the framework of the Europe for Citizens programme so far to reach results at European and at national levels?*

The figures on budget spending during the period 2014-2016 show that the programme was efficient in achieving the expected results in line with the work programmes adopted for each programming year. A total amount of EUR 67 806 683 were awarded out of EUR 187 718 000 for Strand 1, Strand 2 and the Horizontal Action.

The budget available for Strands 1 and 2 is being spent at an even rate each year. This is providing predictability for beneficiaries and is an efficient approach.

Given the wide spectrum of the programme's objectives and the external factors such as the different political, economic and social situation in different EU Member States which can influence outcomes, it is very difficult to measure the benefits achieved from this expenditure in quantitative terms. Therefore the cost-benefit analysis of the mid-term evaluation mainly focused on qualitative aspects (see replies to the subsequent qualitative questions).

The main purpose of EfCP is to increase citizens' awareness and understanding of the EU, its history and diversity and foster active citizenship. In this respect, activities funded by the programme provide significant benefits to the citizens as participants have better knowledge of the EU and its history, feel more European, participate actively to the debate on the future of Europe and exchange experiences. Annual calls for action grants allow citizens' involvement in EfCP activities.

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[43] See Section 3, State of play.

Organisations are able to carry out cross-border activities that otherwise would not be financed. These organisations benefitted from one call for operating grants, awarding support under framework partnerships for 4 years (2014-2017).

The time to grant, i.e. the time between the submission of the application and the contract signature, was 4.5 months on average. This demonstrates the efficient implementation of the programme.

- *To what extent have the resources been properly used to achieve the programme's objectives? Were the positive effects achieved at reasonable costs? What factors influenced the programme efficiency?*

Between 2014 and 2016 the programme reached around 300 000 (under Strand 1) and 3 million people (under Strand 2) directly and 540 000 people (under Strand 1) and 3.3 million (under Strand 2) indirectly. These figures confirm that the programme's resources have been efficiently used as they show that a high number of direct and indirect participants were reached with modest resources.

In terms of the number of grants awarded, the total number of projects was far fewer than the number that the programme had planned to support. This was due to a higher average value of grant per project in the period covered by this report. Moreover, projects with an enlarged partnership involved more participants and therefore, more citizens per project. These factors influenced the programme's efficiency.

Number of projects awarded versus number of projects planned
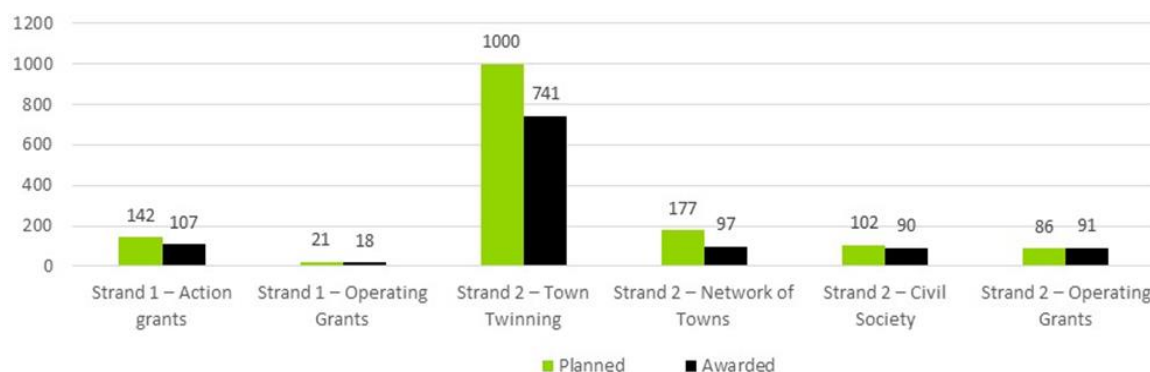
Despite the EfCP's budget not increasing the beneficiaries remain satisfied with the service provided, thus suggesting cost-effectiveness from doing more with less.

- *Is there any room for simplification?*

The main simplification implemented in the new EfCP programming period 2014-2020 was the introduction of only two strands (compared to four action strands in the previous Programme 2007-2013), accompanied by an Horizontal Action. The structure of the different types of actions/measures of projects also became clearer compared to the previous programme. These changes proved to work satisfactorily even though greater clarity about the link between the two

strands has been raised by some programme stakeholders, and in particular of the civil dialogue group.[44]

The programme guide was in principle found to be helpful. But during the case studies analysis, some scope for further improvement was identified[45]. When comparing EfCP with other similar initiatives at EU level, a greater clarity was requested by the ECPs on expectations of how to develop synergies with the European Solidarity Corps.[46]

Some changes in the application and evaluation process were introduced recently such as multiannual priorities, a range of e-measures (i.e. e-reports) and lump-sum payments.[47]

Programme's beneficiaries, considered that these changes have positively affected the quality of applications and the willingness of potential beneficiaries to apply[48]. Providing funding via lump sums is particularly suited to the action grants, although three years' experience of this system has raised the question whether variations in costs of living and travel between participating countries could be better taken into account within the overall budget without modifying the lump-sum approach.

The simplification carried out over the last two years has been a major, and beneficial, leap forward. Those steps have included the introduction of multi-annual priorities and a range of e-measures. Introducing greater transparency into the evaluation process would further improve satisfaction levels among successful and unsuccessful applicants.

The monitoring process would benefit from a review to identify baselines and choose workable indicators, as requested by the CDG[49] and reported under the section "Method" of this document.

A more strategic approach to communication and dissemination about the programme has been recommended in order to improve the programme's visibility.

- *Was the size of the budget appropriate and proportional to achieve the programme objectives?*

With a budget of EUR 187 718 000 the programme has been able to use all of its commitment and payment appropriations during the reporting period.

The division between the programme's strands and activities was as follows:

- EUR 9.46 million was granted to European remembrance projects.
- EUR 12.21 million to town-twinning projects.
- EUR 12.71 million to networks of towns.
- EUR 10.32 million to civil society projects.
- EUR 3.64 million was granted as structural support to European remembrance organisations.

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[44]   See Annex 2, stakeholders' consultations,results of the meeting with organisation represented within the Civil Dialogue Group

[45]   Deloitte report, section 4.3.4

[46]   See Annex 2, stakeholders' consultations, on-line focus groups with ECPs. For more information on European solidarity Corps, see https://europa.eu/youth/solidarity/mission_en

[47]   DG HOME annual report 2015 on EfCP activities.

[48]   Deloitte report, Annex B, web- based survey results

[49]   See Annex 2, stakeholders' consultations,results of the meeting with organisation represented within the Civil Dialogue Group

- EUR 16.65 million was granted to think tanks and European CSOs active in the area of civic participation.
- EUR 2.8 million horizontal activities, including for valorisation of the programme's results.

The average rate of the number of projects funded compared to the number of projects submitted over the period 2014-2016 was under 10%, except for town twinning, while in 2016 it reached 8% for remembrance projects, 9% for networks of towns and 5% for civil society projects[50]. The high demand shows that there is scope to absorb additional funding, including for follow-up and dissemination. Despite their positive evaluation, a significant number of projects, which could have helped the programme to have a wider impact, could not be funded due to the budget limitations. Stakeholders have stressed that this situation could discourage applicants from re-applying.

In its March 2017 report on the programme's implementation for the period 2014-2020[51] the European Parliament called on the Council and the Commission to consider a total financial allocation of approximately EUR 500 million for the successor programme under the next MFF[52].

- ***Which type of grants (operating grants compared to actions grants) has been the most efficient tool to achieve the programme's objectives?***

  EU-level interviewees, CDG members and respondents to the public consultation agreed that the current system of operating grants provide a minimum of stability and an opportunity for long-term planning to organisations which are essential for developing civil society which often operate in a difficult financial environment. Their argument was that operating grant beneficiaries are very active and proactive in ensuring the participatory approach and by their nature they are sustainable multipliers while action grants are project-specific and have a shorter life span.

  On the other hand, many interviewees, including the ECPs, argued that the stability offered by operating grants should not constitute life support to these organisations, but that large CSOs or think tanks should over time be able to find alternative and differing sources of funding.

  The overall view of stakeholders is that both action and operating grants should continue as they fulfil different roles. Actions grants have enabled concrete projects to be implemented in line with the objectives.

  Coherence

- ***To what extent has the programme so far proved complementarity to other EU funding programmes with related objectives, in particular in the area of citizens' rights, education and culture?***

  The EfCP is not the only programme dealing with citizenship and related issues. The programme's objectives are complementary to the objectives of other programmes in the area of active citizenship, education, young people and volunteering. These programmes include the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme, Erasmus+ and Creative Europe.

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[50] DG HOME Annual Reports on the programme activities 2014, 2015 and 2016.

[51] European Parliament Report on the implementation of Council Regulation (EU) N0 390/2014 of 14 April 2014 establishing the 'Europe for citizens' programme for the period 2014-2020 (2015/2329(INI)) .

[52] Representing a symbolic '1 euro per citizen'.

There is evidence of limited direct overlap between them and the EfCP in terms of content, objectives and target groups. Nevertheless, the EfCP offers a unique programme and reaches beyond the target groups it shares with the other funding programmes through the potential of a broad range of activities for citizens. For example, the Rights, Equality and Citizenship programme puts the emphasis on 'mobile' EU citizens and promoting their participation and inclusion by raising their awareness of the rights they hold as mobile EU citizens. However the purpose of the EfCP is to reach EU citizens and strengthen their democratic and civic participation. The Erasmus+ programme, through the call for proposals 'Civil Society Cooperation in the field of Education and Training and Youth', provides structural support, in the form of operating grants, to European non-governmental organisations and EU-wide networks active in the education and training field or in the youth field. In the Creative Europe programme, the culture dimension is predominant even where there is a citizenship dimension. Therefore, the two programmes can be deemed complementary.

Some synergies between these programmes are being exploited on the ground, notably through some informal cooperation of national structures such as ECPs, the Creative Europe Desks and Erasmus+ National Agencies which occurs occasionally. The setting up of the VALOR platform through cooperation between programmes has been an example of developing synergies. However, the potential for complementarity and synergies is not yet maximised either at national or EU level, which hinders the gain of mutual benefits between these EU funding programmes.

Stakeholder interviews clearly showed that the EfCP was unique in bringing together CSOs and local authorities to develop citizenship activities. This view was broadly shared by ECPs and the CDG, as well as stakeholders contributing to the public consultation.[53] In its report on the EfCP's implementation from March 2017, the European Parliament came to similar conclusions.

- ***How well did the Europe for Citizens programme work together with other EU instruments, especially in the area of education, vocational training and youth, sport, culture, fundamental rights, social inclusion, gender equality, combating discrimination, research and innovation, information society, enlargement and the external action of the Union?***

    The EfCP is coherent with other EU tools dedicated to increasing EU citizens' participation in civil society and providing them with information, and is line with other instruments in the areas of volunteering, youth, as well as research and innovation.

    Some synergies between these programmes are being exploited on the ground, notably through the informal cooperation of national structures such as ECPs, the Creative Europe Desks and Erasmus+ National Agencies which occurs occasionally. However, the potential for complementarity and synergies could be further exploited at national or EU level, which would allow to increase mutual benefits for both strands of the EfCP.

    There are apparent synergies between the programme's objective to encourage civic participation and the tools that enable citizens to engage in a practical way, potentially resulting in active citizenship. Synergies also exist between the programme and volunteering initiatives at EU level, and have been strengthened by the EfCP's recent referencing of the European Solidarity Corps in the 2017 work programme and call for proposals. EfCP has already engaged its first participants and several projects selected and beneficiaries of operating grants will offer further placements. Given that the European Solidarity Corps initiative has only been launched recently, these synergies can be further developed.

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[53]   See Annex 2, Stakeholder consultation

Unexploited synergies also exist in relation to other key policies, including youth policy, as well as research and innovation. A number of innovative youth projects were funded by the EfCP in 2014 and 2015. In the field of Research & Innovation (R&I), the Commission promotes the Responsible Research and Innovation approach (RRI) to involve all societal actors including citizens and civil society organisations in the development of R&I policy. RRI has the potential to contribute to citizens' understanding of the Union and its policy making processes in the field of R&I, notably through the provision of information content understandable by all. This shows that the EfCP and these initiatives are complementary. Although if the evaluation did not identify any explicit exploitation of the potential synergies, these could boost the programme's impact and contribute to achieving the political priorities set out in the 2017 Citizenship Report and the White Paper on the Future of Europe.

- ***To what extent are the objectives of the programme's different strands of the programme consistent and mutually supportive? What evidence exists of synergies between the different strands and actions? How well do both strands work together?***

  The experience of the EfCP suggests that in practice the two strands are consistent and can be mutually supportive, on the basis of the natural connection between lessons learned from the past and plans made for the future of Europe.

  Project results occasionally link the two strands through the finding that the fostering of European citizenship is often implicated through the learning and understanding of the links between Europe's past, present and future in Strand 1 projects, while some Strand 2 projects implicitly raise awareness on Europe's shared history and values through the reflection on its future.

  However, some CDG members commented that the relationship between both strands still needs to be further explained and exploited, which would consequently increase the programme's attractiveness as an initiative that can positively impact the daily lives of citizens.

EU added value

- ***What does the Europe for Citizens programme offer in addition to other citizenship support schemes available at national or regional level?***

  As the impact assessment pointed out, there is no single solution for bridging the gap between the EU and its citizens, for the lack of participation and for the limited development of a sense of belonging and of European identity. They require a variety of measures and coordinated efforts through transnational and European level activities. However, developing the understanding and capacity for participating in EU policy making and developing opportunities for solidarity and societal engagement is so wide in scope and ambition that it can only be addressed at EU level.

  Remembrance activities usually go beyond single Member States. Initiatives such as networks of towns and Pan-European valorisation platforms focusing on the analysis, dissemination and valorisation of the project results from both strands, are needed to broaden perspectives and enable transnational exchanges even where there is scope for exchanging and disseminating best practice at national level.

  The evaluation study showed that all consulted stakeholders **emphasised the programme's uniqueness**, highlighting that no other initiative offering funding for cross-European activities in remembrance and civic participation exists at EU level or within the Member States.

- *What has been the European added value of the programme? Which observed changes has the EU intervention brought about compared to what could have been achieved at national level?*

  The evidence of the programme's added value is shown by the **number of applications** submitted versus the number of grants allocated and information on the lack of similar funding at national or regional level. It is very hard for beneficiaries to receive **local, regional or national funding** for citizenship activities, while funding for remembrance activities is even less available in many participating countries.

  The level of reliance of beneficiaries on EfCP funding is also an important indicator of the programmes added value in the EU.

  The qualitative research confirmed the absence of alternatives should there be no EfCP. In the interviews with operating grant beneficiaries, interviewees pointed to a very small number of sources of funding they have access to in their Member State for similar activities. Desk research on the activities of one funding source found that it was not similar to the EfCP in terms of its focus and scope and could not be considered as a similar measure at national level. Similarly, in discussions with project managers of case study projects, it was found that some received only small amounts of funding from local authorities for very small-scale activities conducted at the local level. It is clear that, even if beneficiaries have received funding for "similar" activities, alternative funding sources do not prioritise the promotion of citizenship and remembrance at an EU level. This is particularly the case when it comes to town-twinning. Town-twinning agreements certainly occur between European cities outside of the EfCP but within these agreements there may not be a link to encouragement of active citizenship or remembering historical moments. Thus, the effective results achieved by the programme in impacting citizens at EU level (at a low cost per project) are therefore attributable solely to the intervention of the EU in this area.

  Importantly, there is very strong evidence that the programme is overall unique given that funding at national or regional level to achieve the same or similar objectives is at best very limited. Stakeholders' limited or inability to conduct similar projects without the support of the EfCP also highlights the level of reliance of beneficiaries on the programme.

  The programme demonstrates clear added value at the EU level as the activities financed are transnational by nature. In addition it has EU added value both in the aggregate effect of its impact on participants and its complementarity with other EU funding instruments and policy initiatives.

  Thus, all stakeholders agree that the EfCP can add value to Member States' activities at national or regional level in this area (to the extent that there is any). As assessed under the section "Coherence", the EfCP contributes to the **European Citizens Initiative**[54] and to the **European Solidarity Corps**. The complementarity of the EfCP with activities reflected in the **Citizenship Report**[55] is also important as the programme offers a solution to meeting the aims of promoting awareness of citizens' rights and strengthening common values. In particular, the EfCP provides a mechanism for enhancing citizens' participation in the democratic life of the EU through Civil Society Projects that educate and raise awareness among citizens on EU policy, the democratic process and existing channels of direct participation that exist in the EU.

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[54] Regulation No 211/2011of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 February 2011 on the Citizens' initiative, http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:02011R0211-20150728&from=EN

[55] EU Citizenship Report 2017, available: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-118_en.htm

It is also the assessment of the European Parliament, that the EfCP has "played a valuable part in different policy areas, including justice, freedom and security, migration, employment and social policy, as well as education, training and youth".

- *What would be the most likely consequences of stopping the Europe for Citizens programme?*

There is a demonstrated need for EU action in the area of remembrance and civil society and the positive impacts achieved by the programme are not likely to be attained by other means should it not be continued. All project managers interviewed in the framework of the external study (case study exercise) stressed that their projects would not have been carried out had they not received a grant under the EfCP. When asked about the possibility of not receiving funding under the programme, the majority of beneficiaries responded that they would find it "difficult" (31% of 75 respondents) or "very difficult" (32% of 75 respondents) to remain operational without the funding from the EfCP.

Therefore, the likely consequences of stopping the programme will be that:

- Member States would not be able to offer the same support at national/regional level;
- projects would not be carried out due to the lack of a national support scheme; and
- operating grant beneficiaries would have to cease their current activities that are funded by the programme.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The EfCP 2014-2020 was proposed during the recent financial and economic crisis, at a time when there was also an increasing lack of confidence towards the EU and its added value. It was deemed important in this context to make the EU's role and achievements known to its citizens and to involve them further in the democratic process at EU level.

In this context, the programme's mid-term evaluation confirms its **relevance** for:

- promoting civic participation;
- strengthening the sense of belonging to the EU; and
- mutual understanding.

Overall, this instrument plays a positive role in fostering citizens' civic participation and democratic engagement, reaching out to a large number of citizens who without the programme would not have become engaged with the European project. Thus the programme's general objectives were and remain relevant to addressing the problems.

Most of the activities under both strands **effectively contributed to the EfCP's two specific objectives**, as set out in the Regulation.

These activities have helped to boost civic participation and the overall debate on the EU's past, present and future. In qualitative terms, external factors made it difficult to measure EfCP's effectiveness in achieving its general and specific objectives as they could have influenced the programme's impact in terms of awareness,understanding and civic engagement. Nevertheless, the tables on the programme implementation indicate that progress has been achieved on the quality side. The way in which individual citizens are involved is seen as one of the programme's strengths.

The actual performance of the programme based on the results between 2014 and 2016 and the level of participation goes beyond the previous programme's achievements. The programme is successfully reaching

out to new audiences both by attracting new beneficiaries and through larger, more transnational partnerships. The geographic balance is good overall, although this is not the case with town twinning, with the selection being dominated by only a few countries. This balance could be improved by increasing the programme's attractiveness for organisations and individuals in some countries that provided fewer applicants.

There is still scope to further develop the programme's governance and implementation in order to follow the recommendations of the previous programme's ex post evaluation. In particular, a more structured dialogue between the programme's central management and the beneficiaries, namely the ECPs and the CDG could be established in order to reach wider sections of civil society in Europe.

Dissemination activities should be further improved as ECPs are still not very well known and applicants are not yet fully aware of their role. A more strategic approach should be introduced in order to ensure that these activities are further developed and that information sharing on good practices is strengthened to enable ECPs to provide better assistance to future applicants. For this purpose ECPs should be required to disseminate project results in order to increase the benefits of the Horizontal Action.

Methodological limitations do not allow to draw solid conclusions reagarding the **efficiency** of the programme. Nevertheless, the high number of direct and indirect beneficiaries that have been reached by the EfCP indicate that the programme was efficient. The amounts received under the EfCP for individual activities are proportionate to the beneficiaries' purposes and cost-effective in fulfilling the programme's objectives. Compared to the previous programme, the number of projects that received a grant was lower for all the respective measures. This can partly be explained by the larger size of the projects and higher number of participants involved. The demand for the EfCP is even stronger then it was at the beginning of the programming period and the programme budget is staying below demand levels.

Both action and operating grants are used efficiently for the separate functions they fulfil and in pursuing the programme's objectives.

The simplification carried out over the last two years has produced improvements in the quality of the evaluation and monitoring process. This would benefit from a review to identify baselines and choose workable indicators.

The programme's current structure with two strands and a horizontal action works well even though synergies between the strands and measures could be strengthened. There could be greater clarity about whether the strands are truly stand-alone or a closer link is needed to ensure coherence and a clear continuum between past, present and future.

At EU level, the EfCP is **coherent** with EU funding and other instruments dedicated to increasing EU citizens' participation in EU civil society and providing them with information, as well as with other instruments in the areas of volunteering, youth, and research and innovation. It complements other EU funding programmes, notably Erasmus+ and Creative Europe's Culture sub-programme. However, the other EU funding initiatives do not address the issue in its entirety and do not have the participation angle. To optimise the programme's impact and cost-effectiveness, more structured cooperation could be established between the EfCP, the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme, Creative Europe and Erasmus+ to enable discussion on future policy developments and to maximise the potential for synergies at central and national level. These conclusions were also included in the ex post evaluation of the previous EfCP programme.

Complementarity and synergies with other similar EU networks at national level could be further explored.

The programme enabled activities that could not have been funded elsewhere, in addition to promoting the spread of best practices. The programme demonstrates **added value** at the EU level as the activities financed are transnational by nature. In addition, it has EU added value both in the aggregate effect of its impact on participants and its complementarity with other EU funding instruments and policy initiatives. Furthermore, very strong evidence shows that the programme is unique and that should it be discontinued its positive impacts are not likely to be felt by other means.

Annex 1: Procedural information

1. **LEAD DG, D*e*CIDE PLANNING/CWP REFERENCES**

Lead Directorate-General: Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs (DG HOME)
D*e*CIDE planning reference: 2017/HOME/175

2. **ORGANISATION AND TIMING**

The evaluation was carried out between January and December 2017.

An external contractor, Deloitte and Coffey, was commissioned under the Framework Contract for evaluation, Impact Assessment and Related Services (HOME/2015/EVAL/02) to carry out a mid-term evaluation of the Europe for Citizens programme (2014-2020). The final report was completed in September 2017.

An interservice Steering group led by DG HOME was set up specifically for this evaluation. The representatives of the following Commission services were members of the group:

Secretariat General

Directorate-General for Justice

Directorate-General for Education and Culture

Directorate-General for Budget

Chronology of the mid-term evaluation:

- 14 April 2016: kick-off meeting of mid-term evaluation Steering group;

- 10 November 2016: second meeting of mid-term evaluation Steering group;

- 9 January 2017-10 April 2017: open public online consultation;

- 17 March 2017: the mid-term evaluation Steering group discussed the interim report;

- 30 May 2017: the mid-term evaluation Steering group discussed the draft final report and asked for several improvements.

3. **EXCEPTIONS TO THE BETTER REGULATION GUIDELINES**

N/A

4. **CONSULTATION OF THE RSB (IF APPLICABLE)**

N/A

5. EVIDENCE, SOURCES AND QUALITY

The evaluation was based on evidence from different sources. The main sources were the monitoring reports produced once per year by the EACEA which contain ongoing monitoring data on the projects, based on the information obtained from beneficiaries and the results of monitoring visits. In addition, the annual reports for 2014, 2015 and 2016 on the activities of the EfCP presented by the Commission to the Programme Committee provided evidence on the programme's results.

The complete set of documents that were consulted for this evaluation is listed below:

Legal basis of EfCP

- Council Regulation (EU) No 390/2014 of 14 April 2014 establishing the Europe for Citizens Programme for the period 2014-2020

- Decision No 1904/2006/EC of the European Parliament and the Council of 12 December 2006, establishing for the period 2007 to 2013 the programme 'Europe for citizens' to promote active European citizenship

- Council Decision 2004/100/EC of 26 January 2004 establishing a Community action programme to promote Active European Citizenship

Commission Implementing Decisions 2014, 2015, 2016

- Commission Implementing Decision C(2013)7160 concerning the adoption of the 2014 work programme and the financing for the implementation of the Europe for Citizens Programme

- Commission Implementing Decision C(2014)9220 on the adoption of the 2015 work programme and the financing for the implementation of the Europe for Citizens Programme

- Commission Implementing Decision C(2015)9186 on the adoption of the 2016 work programme and the financing for the implementation of the Europe for Citizens Programme

EU documents

- European Commission, Secretary-General, Director-General for Budget, Note for the attention of Directors General and Heads of Service, Preparation of the post-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework programmes: guidance to services, Brussels, SG.B.1/ BUDG.B.1

- European Commission Report to the European Parliament. the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the implementation, results and overall assessment of the 'Europe of Citizens' Programme 2007-2013, COM(2015) 652 final.

- European Commission Staff Working Document, Better Regulation Guidelines, {COM(2015) 215 final}, {SWD(2015) 110 final}, Strasbourg, 19.5.2015

- European Commission, Better Regulation Toolbox

- European Council 15 and 16 October 1999 of Tampere, Presidency Conclusions

- European Council 7 – 10 December 2000 of Nice, Presidency Conclusions

- European Parliament, Directorate-General for Internal Policies, Policy Department B: Structural and Cohesion Policies, Culture and Education, Note on Europe for Citizens (2014-2020), IP/B/CULT/NT/2012-001, September 2012

- European Parliament, Europe for Citizens Programme 2014-2020. European Implementation Assessment, July 2016

- European Parliament, Directorate-General for Internal Policies, Policy Department B: Structural and Cohesion Policies, Culture and Education, Europe for Citizens Programme: New Programme Implementation — First Experiences, July 2016

- European Parliament, Report on the implementation of Council Regulation (EU) No 390/2014 of 14 April 2014 establishing the 'Europe for Citizens' programme for the period 2014-2020, (2015/2329(INI)), Committee on Culture and Education, Rapporteur: María Teresa Giménez Barbat, 1.02.2017

- European Parliament resolution of 2 March 2017 on the implementation of Council Regulation (EU) No 390/2014 of 14 April 2014 establishing the 'Europe for Citizens' programme for the period 2014-2020 (2015/2329(INI)), P8_TA-PROV(2017)0063

- EU Citizenship Report 2017, Strengthening Citizens' Rights in a Union of Democratic Change, DG JUST, 2017

- Eurobarometer 82 (Autumn 2014),84(Autumn 2015),86 (Autumn 2016)

EfCP documentation

- Annual Activities Reports of the Europe for Citizens Programme, DG HOME

- Call for proposals for Operating Grants 2014-2017

- EACEA Report Activities (2014, 2015, 2016)

- Europe for Citizens Programme Beneficiaries' lists (available at: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/europe-for-citizens_en)

- Europe for Citizens Programme guides

- Europe for Citizens, results 2007-2013, 22.10.2014

- Europe for Citizens: new programme implementation-first experiences, 2016

- Framework for Civil Dialogue in Matters Covered, by the 'Europe For Citizens' Programme 2014-2020

- Internal Monitoring Documents of EACEA (including indicators)

- Minutes of the Civil Dialogue meetings (2014, 2015, 2016)

- Minutes of the Programme Committee meetings (2014, 2015, 2016)

- National Contact Points, Vademecum, November 2016

- Programme multiannual priorities

- Rules of procedure for the 'Europe for citizens' committee, EFCC/002/2014 — EN

- Selection results (2014, 2015, 2016)

- Draft General Budget of the European Commission for the Financial Year 2018- Working Document Part I- Programme statements of operational expenditure- COM(2017)400- May 2017

- https://myintracomm.ec.europa.eu/budgweb/EN/bud/proc/adopt/Documents/DB2018-WD01-programme-statements.pdf

- Working Programme Statements (ref. DB2018)

Past EfCP evaluation reports

- Commission Report to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, on the mid-term evaluation of the 'Europe for Citizens' Programme 2007-2013, COM(2011) 83 final, Brussels, 1.3.2011

- Commission Staff Working paper — Executive summary of the Impact assessment, accompanying the document 'Proposal for a Regulation of the Council establishing for the period 2014-2020 the programme 'Europe for Citizens' to promote European citizenship', COM(2011)884 final, SEC(2011)1562 final

- Mid-term evaluation of the Europe for Citizens Programme 2007-2013, by Ecorys

- Ex post evaluation of the Europe for Citizens Programme 2007-2013, by Coffey International and Deloitte, September 2015

- Study on measuring the impact of the Europe for Citizens Programme 2007-2013, by Euréval, May 2013

Annex 2: Stakeholder consultation

Consultation with the main stakeholders of the 'Europe for Citizens for Europe' programme has been substantial. The following stakeholders were consulted:

- general public

- beneficiaries of Europe for Citizens action grants and operating grants (both strands);

- non-successful applicants

- the CDG;

- 'Europe for Citizens' National Contact Points in participating countries;

- Members of the Programme Committee and EU officials working on the programme's implementation.

The consultation was conducted over several steps:

- A **public consultation** in all languages was available online for a mandatory period of 12 weeks between 9 January 2017 and 10 April 2017. The purpose of this consultation was to collect insights and experiences on the EfCP from the general public but also from beneficiaries (i.e. organisations that have received/receive funding), from organisations who could be interested in the programme but have not yet submitted an application for funding, as well as unsuccessful applicants. In total, the public consultation received **322 responses**.

- A **web-based survey** targeting the following stakeholder groups:

  o action grant beneficiaries;
  o operating grant beneficiaries; and
  o unsuccessful applicants.

  This consultation was launched by the external consultant via the EU Survey platform and was open from 16 January 2017 until 10 March 2017. It received **80 responses**

- A **consultation meeting** with the main European level stakeholder organisations represented within the programme's CDG was organised to assess how the programme and its results were perceived by European stakeholder organisations. The workshop was held on 15 February 2017 and was attended by **20 CDG members**.

- Three **online focus groups** with a total of **17 ECPs** took place on 7, 8 and 9 February 2017 to discuss the programme's implementation and how the programme, its results and impact at national level were perceived;

- **14 interviews** with a number of EU officials (from DG EAC, EACEA, DG HOME and its Cabinet, DG JUST, and the European Parliament) and four

interviews with members of the Programme Committee (from France, Greece, Hungary and Slovenia). The main aim of these interviews was to obtain insights on some particular aspects of the programme, as well as on the more general issues of programme design and implementation.

Public consultation results:

- *Awareness, experience and involvement in the EfCP and EU-related activities*

The overall level of awareness of the EfCP among survey participants was very high (87%). More than 8 out of 10 reported that they had heard about the EfCP before participating in the public consultation. On their experience with the EfCP, almost 40% of respondents stated that their organisation received funding from the programme. More than one in six stated that they were aware of the programme but had no practical experience with it. Slightly less reported that they knew of the EfCP because they had attended an event or participated in a project funded by the programme. About their general involvement in EU activities such as voicing their opinion on the EU, engaging in EU affairs and participating in the EU policy-making process, two thirds of all participants stated that they are well or sufficiently involved in EU-related activities. Less than 1 in 10 respondents reported not being involved at all.

- *Importance of activities funded by EfCP for EU action*

Overall the participants appeared to deem all activities to be important. The most relevant activity for EU action was considered to be the civil society projects followed by the networks of towns, whereas the least important was the financing of operating grants

- *Interest in taking part in EfCP activities and effects of past participation*

Respondents were overall keen to participate in future EfCP-funded activities. However, 1 in 10 responded negatively. Participation in civil society projects attracted the biggest interest from the respondents. This was also the activity that they deemed most important for EU action. Almost half of the respondents who expressed an interest in participating in EfCP-funded activities were very interested in obtaining an operating grant or funding for town-twinning activities. However, this contrasts with the fact that public consultation respondents considered operating grants as the least important aspect of the EfCP for EU action. While the activities taking place under networks of towns scheme were deemed to be the second most important type of activity for EU action, it appears that respondents were least attracted by participation in this programme area. For each activity, less than 1 in 10 respondents stated no interest to participate at all.

Overall, at least two out of three respondents stated they were 'very interested' or 'rather interested' to participate in the activities funded by the EfCP.

Those who had already been involved in EfCP-funded activities were asked to comment on how their participation affected them in relation to four aspects of their relationship with the EU and their sense of European identity. More than two thirds of the respondents reported that they had felt some effects from their participation. Among those, the strongest effect was that after the programme finished participants wanted to get more involved in civic society. A significant number also claimed that they had learnt more about Europe, its history and culture, and slightly less felt more European following their participation.

Respondents were given the opportunity to add any comments/suggestions as well as share any position papers expressing the views of their organisation regarding the EfCP. A total of **102 comments and, 32 contributions** were submitted[56].

Web-based survey results

- *Questions on the EfCP structure*

  The feeling that the EfCP effectively addresses its objectives was echoed by the large majority of the respondents (75%).

  On remembrance projects, a significant proportion strongly agreed (66%) or agreed (59%) that their funded project had raised awareness among participants on the common values they share with others in Europe, the EU's history, values and aim.Almost half also claimed that participants learned more about their common past.

  The results indicate that ECPs are mostly used for requesting information. Around half the respondents had not used the ECP to review their application or look for partners. Among the reasons for not using the services, survey respondents stated that the ECP network had not been advertised enough or that they felt they did not need any help. Beneficiary respondents who reported using the service were positive about the ECPs' provision of information and clarifications. This suggests that the ECPs' role in disseminating information is positively perceived by the users of their services.

  Regarding the introduction of the lump-sum approach currently implemented to co-fund the projects via action grants, more than three quarters of the respondents (77%) were very or rather satisfied.

  The simplification of online applications has positively affected their quality and encouraged potential beneficiaries to apply. Most respondents to the web-based survey (67%) found the application process to be 'very' or 'rather satisfactory'.

- *Questions on projects' implementation and EU funding*

  On the impacts of their EfCP-funded projects, the beneficiaries were generally positive about the effects felt by their project participants. The impacts that were particularly highlighted were that the participants shared their experience and knowledge with others and that they found their experience memorable, which suggests that the results had the potential to be long-lasting.

  In terms of the administrative burden related to any reporting/monitoring activities, the respondents felt that EACEA's requirements are 'reasonable' overall. On budget monitoring, beneficiaries believed that the current financial supervision is quite 'light'.

  On the target group, it should be stressed that the similarity of target groups between the EfCP, Creative Europe and Erasmus+ is evident from the responses to the web-based survey. Half of the beneficiaries who completed the survey had received funding for remembrance/citizenship-related activities from other EU

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[56] The comments are included in Deloitte's final report.

sources. The number was particularly high for citizenship-related activities, which shows the high potential for synergies with EfCP. Among other programmes of interest and relevance to the beneficiaries, they cited Creative Europe, Erasmus/Erasmus+ (including Youth in Action) and the European Voluntary Service. However, while these programmes may cater for comparable stakeholders, they are fundamentally different in what they offer and consider active citizenship from distinct points of view.

Beneficiaries who had received local, regional or national funding for citizenship activities were in a clear minority, while such funding for remembrance activities is even harder to come by.

Although prompted to provide information on the type of funding they received at national, regional or local level, most survey respondents did not state the precise initiative or funding mechanism. Among the very few survey responses providing more information, ministries, municipalities and local authorities were mentioned as alternative funding sources, without reference to a specific programme.

When asked about the possibility of not receiving funding under the programme, most beneficiaries claimed that they would find it 'difficult' (31% of 75 respondents) or 'very difficult' (32%) to operate without EfCP funding.

Survey respondents who were unsuccessful in their bid for EfCP funding were asked about the impact that this had had on their project. Only five responses to the survey came from unsuccessful applicants. Therefore it cannot be claimed that these answers are representative, but nevertheless they are of interest as they provide the best information available to us on the consequences of not receiving EfCP funding. Among these five unsuccessful applicants, three stated that their project was cancelled because of the failure to obtain funds. The remaining two stated that their project continued but with fewer resources. Only one respondent indicated that they received alternative local-level funding after failing to secure funding via the EfCP. The project was however carried out with fewer resources than if it had been funded by the EfCP.

Results of the meeting with organisations represented within the Civil Dialogue Group (CDG) of 15.02.2017

The CDG stated that the EfCP is more important than ever in the current political context. However, on the programme structure, the participants expressed dissatisfaction with the CDG meetings organised as part of the Horizontal Action. They stated that these consisted mostly of networking sessions among the group and there was only one-way communication with little bilateral engagement (between the Commission and the group). The CDG members would prefer an approach enabling open and structured dialogue. They also expressed an interest in having discussions with policy makers and other (national) stakeholders.

In addition, the CDG members pointed out that there is currently insufficient follow-up to the meetings. The minutes are usually sent too long after the meetings have taken place and contain lengthy and unnecessary information (unsuitable for highlighting key points and or for sharing with constituents).

The importance of having two strands was explored and the vast majority of CDG member workshop attendees agreed on the importance of both strands of the programme, although not all perceived a link between the two. Those seeing a relationship believed that it makes sense to have only one programme dealing with democracy: the past and lessons learnt (Strand 1) together with the present and the future (Strand 2). However, they commented that the relationship between both strands needs to be further explained and exploited, which would consequently increase the programme's attractiveness as an initiative that can positively impact on the daily lives of citizens.

CDG members agreed that the current system of operating grants provide a minimum of stability and an opportunity for organisations essential to the development of civil society to plan long-term as they currently operate in a difficult financial climate. Their argument was that operating grant beneficiaries are very active and proactive in ensuring the participatory approach and by their nature they are sustainable multipliers while action grants are project-specific and have a short life span.

CDG member workshop participants expressed dissatisfaction with the indicators, most notably the indicators on impact. Participants believed that the need for measurable indicators in this context is not justified. The impact is completely different in different circumstances and it is not comparable across all projects. It was further stated that not only is it inappropriate to compare these types of impact indicators, but often it is actually impossible to estimate or report on their impact. Workshop participants also claimed that they were not consulted when the programme's monitoring indicators were being created.

CDG workshop participants commented that the use of project results seems limited as the Commission puts too much emphasis on the number of attendees at an event rather than on the quality of attendees (i.e. reaching 1 000 young people versus 20 politicians who may be more appropriate to act as multipliers).

CDG workshop participants felt that the communication activities of DG HOME and EACEA were not sufficient, although it appears that there is a suitable level of awareness. Criticism was levelled at the websites promoting the EfCP for lacking structure, not being sufficiently interactive and not always being updated in a timely fashion. In particular, it was claimed that current communication activities do not focus enough on promoting the results of the programme and the benefits it offers for regular citizens (networking, meeting different cultures and contexts).

CDG members seem to see less of a benefit from the Horizontal Action as a whole, especially because they felt that the activities funded were not visible and lacked transparency. Some CDG members questioned the need for the ECPs, but they are aware of the programme's details and need less assistance than new entrants, so there may be a bias in these comments. Moreover, others highlighted that in the broad scale of the programme, the percentage of funding allocated to the horizontal strand is quite minimal and therefore it is understandable that results are less visible.

On complementarity and synergies, CDG members stated that it is not totally clear how the European Solidarity Corps fits in with the EfCP's objectives and what potential synergies could be developed in practice.

CDG members saw a disadvantage in the fact that the current system does not carry any weight to reflect different levels of prosperity in different Member States (and therefore

general costs) or make sufficient allowance for travel costs. As a result there is a bias towards cooperating with partners from neighbouring countries rather than making selections based solely on merit.

Most CDG members felt that the lump-sum system imposed a higher administrative burden on operating grant beneficiaries than the former flat rate system because of the need to reapply each year under their framework agreement

CDG members suggested that there are a number of overlaps in the application form, which is inefficient. For example, applicants are required to specify several times their project's objectives and how they match the multiannual priorities and specific objectives.

They highlighted that the online platform/database of Europe for Citizens projects is helpful, but not necessarily user-friendly[57].

Online focus groups with ECPs

The ECPs agreed that the objectives of the two programme strands are complementary and mutually supportive as both aim to bring citizens closer to the EU, so it makes sense for them to be included in the same framework.

ECPs confirm that the EfCP contributes to both the strengthening of civic participation and the raising of awareness on the EU's shared history and values. Compared to the previous programme, participants in the ECP focus group also stated that the stronger focus on European history in this programme is appreciated by many organisations, institutions and municipalities in their countries. At the same time, a large majority of ECPs agreed that the programme's current structure achieves an appropriate balance between past and present.

They perceive the programme as still unique insofar as it links the CSOs and town-twinning movement on an EU level. Without EfCP funding, the only activities which would be carried out would only take place on a much smaller scale and often only locally. However, town-twinning projects may sometimes give the impression of being restricted to those activities funded as a 'one-off' by the EfCP.

Civil society projects were highlighted by half of the ECPs in one focus group as projects that need more funding compared to others. Half of the participants suggested that there should be more focus on other types of projects (notably civil society projects) rather than town-twinning.

Their general impression was that the programme has a certain impact which is difficult to quantify but is nevertheless visible at local level and within the local communities involved. While ECPs could not directly attribute an improvement in civic engagement to

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[57] The external consultant noted that the ability to make improvements to user-friendliness depends on the overall development of the VALOR platform and the programme is not in the driving seat on this. Deloitte was aware that delays in the migration from Documentum to Drupal have, for example, delayed the ability to make improvements to the search function as well as the addition of new functionalities across the underlying platform.

EfCP projects carried out in their Member State, they felt that the overall discussion on democratic and civic participation has been furthered thanks to the EfCP.

The ECPs' impression was that one of the key factors that make the programme outcomes sustainable is emphasising face-to-face interaction.

On complementarity with other programmes, the ECPs consider the EfCP instrumental in supporting the civic engagement of young people and therefore are supporting the idea of exploiting synergies with the Youth programme. The focus groups also indicated that it is not totally clear how the European Solidarity Corps fits in with the EfCP's objectives and what potential synergies could be developed in practice. At national level, there are natural synergies in communication and peer support boosted by the close ties occasionally developed by staff of the National Erasmus+ Agencies and the ECPs, notably when they are hosted in the same country (for instance, in Finland).

The ECPs appeared generally satisfied with their role in the programme, but highlighted possible areas for improvement. The overall impression was that ECPs have relevant knowledge and experience which is not currently mobilised, but could add value to the EfCP. ECP staff complained that their budget has been unchanged for a number of years. The lump sum they receive is linked to holding a minimum number of events with a minimum number of participants. The ECPs consulted perceived this as a rather technical — and at the same time over-simplistic — method of calculation which fails to suitably compensate them for dissemination and communication activities,

On the programme's implementation, a majority of ECPs considered the current rate of pre-financing to be satisfactory. However, ECPs pointed out that the provisions on co-financing in the programme guide are confusing, as they are limited to a single line stating that the entire project costs cannot be borne by the EU.

ECPs agreed that the move to a lump-sum system for the action grants had been an improvement. However, they view as a disadvantage the fact that the current system does not reflect different levels of prosperity in different Member States (or make sufficient allowance for travel costs). They also agree that operating grants should not come to constitute life support and that organisations that receive the grant should also look at alternative sources of financing.

Feedback from the online focus groups with ECPs showed that in their case, there was a high level of satisfaction regarding their collaboration with EACEA.

On dissemination, ECPs also felt that DG HOME's and EACEA's communication activities were not sufficient. Some criticised the lack of regular newsletter updates as the latest DG HOME Newsletter has strong dissemination potential, as it disseminates information on the programme, which is then relayed by the ECPs acting as multipliers.

Feedback to unsuccessful applicants is currently given by EACEA in fairly concise terms, while some applicants would prefer to see more detail on the reasons for the rejection of their project. This also affects ECPs, insofar as it makes it difficult for them to advise potential applicants and develop best practices.

Feedback of interviews with EU officials and members of the Programme Committee

The interviews with Programme Committee members showed alignment with the ex post evaluation of the 2007 – 2013 programme[58], which concluded that the EfCP fills a gap in EU policy, which would otherwise fail to involve citizens in civil society and generate interest among EU citizens' in questions pertaining to EU identity and integration.

The interviewees agreed that the current system of operating grants provide a minimum of stability. The counter-argument heard from many interviewees is that the stability offered by operating grants should not constitute life support, but that large CSOs or think tanks should over time be able to find alternative sources of funding, i.e. the operating grant should be a form of seed funding.

Interviewees identified a gap in measuring the programme's impact in going beyond quantitative measure to ensure that results are used in policy making.

The strategic interviews also emphasised the synergies between EfCP and volunteering, particularly in light of the recommendation to project managers to use the European Solidarity Corps.

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[58] Ex post evaluation of the Europe for Citizens Programme 2007-2013 Final Report, available: http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/pdf/final_efcp_final_report_2015_10_15.pdf.

Annex 3: Europe for Citizens project examples from the period 2014 to 2017

European remembrance project example: Project 'BURNT' by 'Miteinander in Europa' (Germany)

The project 'BURNT', promoted by 'Miteinander in Europa', was carried out in 2014 to remember and reflect upon the book burnings by the Nazis and the banning of certain literature during the Stalinist era. It took place in five European cities in four different countries (Bulgaria, Germany, Romania and Slovenia). It aimed to involve local communities and people of all ages in project activities, as well as stakeholders, members of the public administration, and decision-makers in order to create wide-scale public awareness and debate about EU values notably the freedom of expression. People were invited to:

- take part in creative and interactive activities tailor-made to different target groups;
- read and listen to literature forbidden during the Nazi and/or Stalinist era;
- attend intergenerational talks with contemporary witness, theatre shows, production of documentaries and interviews filmed on the streets and final forums to debate about the outcomes reached.

Regarding the communication tools, project flyers were published and distributed on the streets, whereas interviews, theatre shows, speeches and discussions were put on the project's website.

Town-twinning project example 'Implicare activa, democratie Europeana' by Comuna Capitalnita (Romania)

This town-twinning event took place in Capilnita (Romania) between 10 July 2014 and 14 July 2014 and involved 321 citizens. The main issues addressed during this event were:

- the active involvement in EU democratic life;
- EU elections;
- issues concerning European citizens' rights;
- freedom of movement; and
- equal opportunities.

Through different interactive methods (such as: 'Gateway to Europe' — an info point; workshops; seminars; social activities; forum), the organisers provided the opportunity for participants to get actively involved in discussing the issues raised and formulate their opinions about EU policies. The project promoted debate and reflection about European citizenship and democracy, shared values, history and culture. It allowed participants to gain insight into the EU integration process and its impact on the daily lives of citizens, and to discuss what will be the Europe of tomorrow.

The dissemination activities carried out helped promote opportunities for collaboration and exchange of best practice between a large and varied group of stakeholders and citizens, with particular emphasis on civic participation and the NGO sector. The project was promoted via traditional and online media (i.e. TV, radio, newspapers, blogs etc.), using different dissemination material ('Eurovision citizen' booklet; CDs containing event photos, interviews; partners' websites).

Project partners: Gyöngyössolymos Köszégi Önkormanzyat (Hungary), Kapolna Kozsegi Onkormanyzat (Hungary), Bercel Község Önkormanyzata (Hungary), Urzad Miasta I Gminy (Poland), Mesto Modry kamen (Slovakia)

Network of towns project example: 'MIGRAIN' (migration and integration) by Urzad Miasta i Gminy Cieszanow (Poland)

The theme of the 2014/2015 project was the mobility of citizens within the EU and the immigration of citizens from non-EU countries to the EU.

The project aimed to investigate issues linked to mobility and immigration in Europe and their social impact, and to give citizens the opportunity to participate in formulating answers to these questions.

The towns participating in the network were facing the impact of mobility and immigration including difficulties linked to the arrival of irregular immigrants from non-European countries. By exchanging ideas and examining possible solutions to these issues, the project contributed to developing local strategies and policies for the social integration of immigrants. Moreover, the project contributed to raising awareness among citizens living in the participating towns on the importance of migration for the society by showing successful models of integration for different groups of migrants and by highlighting the existing potential for changes in local communities.

Project partners: Diosd Varos Önkormanyzata (Hungary), Freundeskreis Partnerschaften Gemeinde Argenbühl (Germany), Dimos Lokron (Greece), Comune di Forli (Italy), Comune di Fusignano (Italy), Kmetstvo Aheloy (Bulgaria), Comuna Lupeni (Romania).

Civil society project example: 'SUCCESS' by 'Institut français des relations internationales' (France)

SUCCESS is a network of young European citizens coming from different cultural, social and national backgrounds who are rethinking citizenship together in Europe. The project's objective was to contribute to the reversal of populist, racist and xenophobic tendencies in Europe and promote the founding values of European citizenship. SUCCESS adopted a 'bottom-up' approach and raised the voice of the citizens living in several popular multicultural disadvantaged neighbourhoods in major European cities — Montreuil (near Paris), Palermo, Oeiras (near Lisbon), Birmingham. The project called for a multicultural and integrated Europe.

As a result of the project, citizens living in disadvantaged areas had the opportunity to interact and participate in constructing a tighter-knit Europe, thereby developing their feeling of belonging to the EU. Local groups were created in each of the towns involved in the project. They were able to stimulate the debate on 'citizenship', notably on the civil participation of EU citizens and immigrants in the political and civic life, multiculturalism, mass media and transparency of institutions (accountability). Meeting with local, national and European policy makers (i.e. members of the French Senate) allowed for the transferability of results and represents a successful example of collaboration and integration. A website, a video and a book/e-book were produced.

Project partners: Università di Palermo (Italy), Fundaçao Calouste Gubenkian (Portugal), University of Birmingham (United Kingdom)

European Remembrance project example: 'Mobilising society against genocide, denial, racism and anti-semitism in Europe' by 'European Grassroots Anti-Racist Movement' (France)

The project 'Mobilising society against genocide, denial, racism and anti-semitism in Europe' by 'European Grassroots Anti-Racist Movement' (EGAM, France) was selected in 2015 to address speech on genocide denial and the current rise in xenophobic and Eurosceptic trends. The project seeks to educate citizens on historical events that have been discredited, denied or marginalised in contemporary European society such as Holocaust and the Roma, the Armenian or the Srebrenica genocides. The project comprises 17 NGOs from 14 European countries to help raise awareness and promote a more inclusive Europe by exchanging good practice and by mobilising and empowering European civil society.

Town Twinning project example: 'We in Europe — for peace and humanity in the world' (city of Burg/Germany)

The project 'We in Europe — for peace and humanity in the world' led by the German municipality Burg gathered citizens from municipalities in France, Finland, Greece and Germany to discuss the role of the EU in maintaining peace and respecting human rights. During roundtable discussions, an international conference, meetings, and family exchanges, the project aimed to reflect about the common values on which Europe was built on, and contribute to building a sustainable network.

Example of a Network of Towns: CitiPart — Cities' Partnership against extremism and populism by 'Maison de l'Europe des Yvelines' (France)

CitiPart is an interactive network between eight towns dealing at local level with political debates of interest for citizens. It represents municipalities, town twinning committees, European Houses and youth organisations from France, Germany, Poland, Austria and Hungary. Against the background of rising populism and Euroscepticism as well as decreasing participation in elections, the project aimed to give citizens the floor. The aim of the network was for people to reflect together on today's meaning of the common values of solidarity, tolerance and peace. Through multilateral conferences, citizens had the opportunity to discuss these issues with MEPs and local representatives and to present them with proposals.

Civil Society Project example: 'BY-ME' (Boosting young Migrants' Participation in European Cities: Transnational Solutions to Common Challenges) by Instituto Cooperazione Economica Internazionale (Italy)

The project "BY-ME: Boosting Young Migrants' participation in European cities" by Instituto Cooperazione Economica Internazionale promoted young people's participation in presenting proposals in policy areas that concern them and the "European Union they would like". It aimed in particular to boost the participation of young migrants in the formulation of migration policies and implementation measures by supporting their involvement in local networks and the structured dialogue between young people of foreign origin and local administrations. The project brought together representatives of three big European cities (Milan, Barcelona and Lisbon) with CSOs and groups of migrants. It helped to increase young migrants' civic participation by promoting concrete activities at local level, establish local networks and promote the participation of migrants' associations in these fora. It gave young

migrants the opportunity to contribute to developing public policies and it enabled the three participating cities to share experience and best practice.

Example of a European Remembrance project: 'CROCUS' (Ireland)

The Crocus Project is an Irish initiative whereby Holocaust Educational Trust Ireland (HETI) provides yellow crocus bulbs for school pupils aged 11 years or older to plant in memory of the 1.5 million Jewish children who perished in the Holocaust and thousands of other children who were victims of Nazi atrocities. The yellow flowers recall the yellow Star of David that Jews were forced to wear under Nazi rule.

The Crocus Project is a tangible way of introducing young people to the subject of the Holocaust and to raise awareness about the dangers of racism, discrimination, prejudice and hatred. The children's involvement in learning about the Holocaust, in planting the bulbs and watching the flowers grow, encourages ongoing learning about the importance of tolerance and respect. HETI provides a comprehensive information and guidelines pack to assist teachers in explaining the Holocaust.

The crocus blooms around the end of January around the time of international Holocaust Memorial Day (27 January). When people admire the flowers, the pupils explain what they represent and recall the children who perished in the Holocaust.

The Crocus Project was introduced at the launch of HETI in September 2005. That year, 239 Irish schools participated in the project and 6 000 primary school pupils planted yellow crocus bulbs. Since then, the project has expanded and developed and now involves primary and post-primary pupils as well as some third-level students and youth groups. 10 European countries have joined the project and we hope that more will join each year until we have the whole of Europe participating along with more than one and a half million crocus flowers blooming each year. In 2016/17 over 90 000 Irish and European school pupils were involved in the Crocus Project.

Example of a Town twinning project: 'We of Today — Europe of Tomorrow' by Silales rajono savivaldybes administracija, (Lithuania)

The aim of this small-scale trilateral town twinning project developed by a Lithuanian town in cooperation with its partner towns from Poland and Germany was:

- to make young people aware of different aspects of migration;
- to promote tolerance and solidarity towards migrants and refugees; and
- to decrease xenophobia.

To achieve this objective the project used non-traditional interactive teaching and learning techniques including roundtable discussions, a walking event for tolerance, simulation games, workshops, a 'living' library, film screening, etc. The idea was to show that innovative learning methods offer the opportunity to assess the migration crisis and its origins from different perspectives and to gain a better understanding of the situation of migrants and asylum-seekers.

Example of network of towns: '3i — Welcome to Europe: 3i — inclusion, integration & internationalisation' by Kalajoen kaupunki (Finland)

Based on a partnership between partner towns from Finland, Estonia, Lithuania, Sweden, Italy and Montenegro this project aimed to address negative attitudes towards immigrants, refugees and asylum-seekers by giving citizens the opportunity to interact and to exchange knowledge and best practice related to the inclusion and integration of migrants into local communities as well as on the internationalisation of all questions linked to migration. By doing so, the project tried to promote a strong sense of European identity and to strengthen mutual understanding between long-term and new members of the local communities. Through a platform to learn, share and debate on issues related to the future of Europe, focus was put on involving members of the local communities in developing intercultural dialogue mechanisms.

Example of a Civil Society Project: European Citizens Crowdsourcing- EUCROWD by Zavod Institut Za Elektronsko Participacijo (Slovenia)

This project explored crowdsourcing as one tool offered by digital technologies to increase citizens' engagement in democracy. Crowdsourcing was understood by this project as an open call for online participation in a task by submitting information or knowledge, as it is used in processes ranging from urban planning to new product design to solve complex scientific problems. Seven public workshops organised through this project dealt with the question: How can this tool promote a democratic debate on the future of the European Union? Citizens, NGOs, activists, experts, media, politicians and government officials gathered to share experience on e-participation at national and European level. Moreover, an online repository was set up (knowledge centre on digital democracy) to gather best practice and guidelines for crowdsourcing at the national and European level in the fields of immigration, the economic crisis and the future of Europe.

Town twinning project example: 'Festival of Europe' by Colors of Europe (France)

The 'Festival of Europe' project has been organised every year since 2012 with the idea of gathering young people and citizens on a local level to celebrate Europe.

The 2017 edition of the festival that took place in May 2017 in the 'Ile de France' region brought together 150 local organisations from 20 countries. In the context of the 60th anniversary of the Treaties of Rome, 1200 young people were invited to express their feelings about solidarity and friendship. Their artistic performances were celebrated during the festival and their paintings exhibited. The event attracted 20 000 visitors from 18 countries.

European Remembrance project example 'In Between?' by the Polish organisation European Network of Remembrance and Solidarity

The 'In Between?' project carried out by the Polish organisation the European Network of Remembrance and Solidarity is about stories and history. The projects aims to encourage the younger generation of Europeans to explore 20th-century history by reflecting on the past of eight European cross-border regions through oral testimonies — with their cultural and historical complexities. Participants are given the opportunity to gain theoretical and practical experience in documenting oral stories.

Town-twinning project example by San Bartolomé de las Abiertas (Spain) and Lavernose-Lacasse (France)

The project between San Bartolome de las Abiertas and Lavernose-Lacasse aimed to raise awareness of the EU and its policies such as the common agricultural policy, the current ways to actively participate in the EU decision-making process, etc. through the active engagement of participants in roundtables, presentations and knowledge sharing of local policies and practices. The project targeted different groups of people such as CSOs, schools and the private sector. Special attention was given to sustainable tourism as a tool to support local economies and to promote job creation in rural areas. In addition to the direct participants, people from the village showed great interest in the project and around 200 people took part in the event. Both partners have shown their willingness to continue collaborating in new projects in the future.

Example of a European Remembrance project: 'Women, War and Peace' (2016)

'Women, War and Peace' is an Irish project carried out by the theatre and film company 'Smashing Times Theatres Company Limited', which is dedicated to promoting social justice, peace, gender equality and human rights by means of artistic performances.

Throughout the project, theatre and film as well as public events, including symposia and workshops, provided the framework through which European history including both World War II and its aftermath was explored. 'Women, War and Peace' especially focused on the role of women during that time in order to raise awareness and shed light on ways in which the EU is capable of promoting peace and gender equality today.

To that end, an online book was published which contains 23 women's stories who fought against totalitarianism during World War II. These stories were complemented with information on the EU's history and its role in defending human rights.

Around 2000 young people and adults in Ireland, Spain, Germany and Poland were directly involved in this transnational project and a huge number of citizens were reached as a result of their dissemination activities.