

Stories of European cooperation

Youngsters building together a better Europe



Introduction

It is my pleasure to share with you the 2022 edition of the 'Stories of European Cooperation' publication, this year dedicated to young people and their involvement in Interreg programmes and projects.

The European Union's cohesion policy strives to improve life for all citizens, ensuring that everyone in the EU has a fair chance to a good quality of life. No individual or territory should be left behind. To achieve this goal, we need to involve young people, who are ultimately our future.

I am particularly happy to take advantage of the European Year of Youth to follow up on the progress of the *Manifesto for Youth by Youth to Shape the European Territorial Cooperation*, published by the European Commission at the occasion of Interreg's 30th anniversary.

For the first time in 2020, my services ran a huge consultation among young people who were more or less familiar with Interreg, in order to collect their ideas and wishes on how to improve territorial cooperation in the future and influence Interreg policy making together, at a time when the negotiation of Interreg 2021-2027 programme contents was starting with Member States.

The *Manifesto for Young People by Young People to Shape the European Territorial Cooperation* highlights five fields of action where young people think that Interreg could make the difference: (1) *improving young people's skills & increase access to training opportunities*, (2) *boosting employment for young people in Europe*, (3) *simplification of rules and a better communication via digital tools*, (4) *addressing climate change issues for a better future* and (5) *boosting citizens' engagement in policy making & implementation*.

Young people have therefore elaborated 12 recommendations to improve concretely their participation at all decision making levels. Over the past two years, DG REGIO has made its best to implement hand-in-hand with Interreg programmes and Macro-Regional Strategies what youth requested and this work continues.

Today, I am pleased to share this edition of the 'Stories of European Cooperation' which illustrates good examples of Interreg projects tackling youth's priorities.

We will always encourage engaged young citizens to work with us, because we need the young generation to build a better future for Europe and all its territories.

Have a good reading!



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for Regional and Urban Policy
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Priority 1

Improving young
people's skills

& increasing access
to training opportunities





Improving citizens' competencies in Media Literacy

The Danube region is working on the development of Media Literacy education to boost active citizenship and enhance a more sustainable democracy and good governance

By Mariona Campmajó

Recently, we hear a lot about fake news, misinformation, and hate speech, but how can we identify what is true and what is not? In a rapidly changing technological world, communication dynamics shaped by societal challenges and conditions aggravate this problem and call for a need to palliate its consequences for our democracies.

In this context, media literacy education is essential in supporting individuals to become more critical and resilient toward negative media phenomena. This is the ability to access, analyse, evaluate and create media in different ways. To be able to build an understanding of the role of media in our society, as well as to develop skills of inquiry and self-expression necessary for a healthy democracy.

According to the [Media Literacy Index 2021](#) report, compared with other parts of Europe, countries in the Danube region are far behind in terms of developing competence in media literacy and active citizenship. The report also notes that 'dealing with fake news and disinformation would dial down the temperature of political and social debates [...] and would improve trust in societies contributing to a healthier environment'.

The Melia Observatory project: fourteen countries working together!

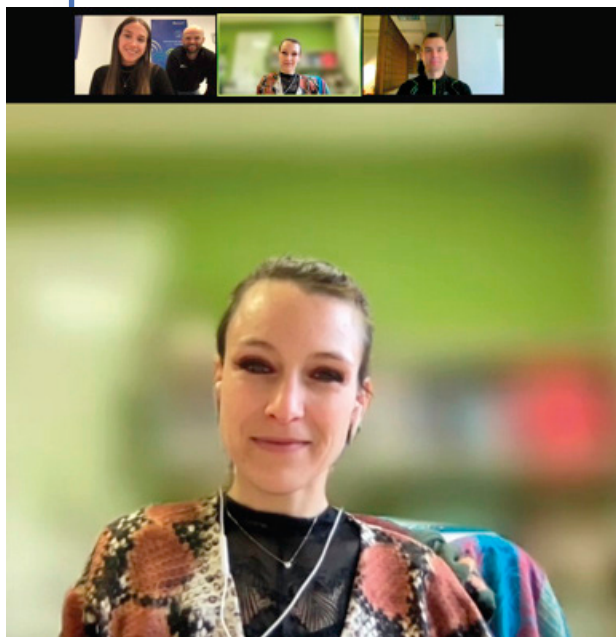
Stressing the need to address this problem, the [Melia Observatory](#) project, financed by the Interreg Danube Transnational programme, focuses on improving democratic transnational governance

by developing a media literacy observatory for active citizenship and sustainable democracy. The project is based on the cooperation among several stakeholders and regions from fourteen countries. The goal is to strengthen citizens'

competencies leading to more positive outcomes for democracy in the region by providing instruments for scrutinising media content, training tools, and policy recommendations.

Testimonial

Rok Bratina, Ph.D. student in Sociology in Nova Gorica (Slovenia), working on the project



Interview with Rok Bratina.

“I will be using the project’s programme for my research, analysing the European perspective of the Visegrád countries during a selected period. This programme, to be called Sentiment Analysis, will read and evaluate different texts based on emotions. Automatically, it will tell the reader if words have a positive, negative, or neutral value using coloured labels. For

example, democracy would be labelled as green, while populism would be red, and vaccination would be neutral”, Rok explains.

He is already using this method to teach his students at university about media literacy, where they are asked to analyse texts and label words according to what sentiment it expresses for them (positive, negative, or neutral). To his surprise, when they start reading the title of news articles, most of their sentiments are negative. Because of that, he asks us to read beyond just a title, as media usually bias those to attract people’s attention.

“We should take a moment to understand and analyse what we are reading and ask ourselves ‘how is this affecting me? What sentiments are expressed there?’, and not only regarding articles but also about social media comments, for example. I see the need for people to read different sources of information in order to compare and come out of the bubble”, Rok stresses.

Helping educators and students

So far, the project has uploaded various handbooks and interactive materials on its website for both **educators** and **students** of different ages. They explain the basic concepts of media literacy education through various examples and activities under different topics: politics, behaviour on social networks, critical thinking, marketing, and more.

Nevertheless, there is still a lot to be done, and the project, considered to be a pioneer in this field, hopes to continue to share its outcomes with other parts of Europe after 2022 and make it accessible to everyone by translating their work to different languages.

For a project to tackle such significant societal challenges such as the stagnating political participation in the countries of the Danube region, cooperation of all the **relevant stakeholders** in the fields of media, education and civil society will be essential.

As the partners of Melia Observatory project write, ‘the virtual world is an environment that provides opportunities to simplify and distort information, manipulate and influence our opinions,’ and, because of that, it is vital to educate the population on how to approach this topic properly.



More information:

<https://www.interreg-danube.eu/approved-projects/melia-observatory>



Mariona Campmajó

- Age: 24
- Nationality: Spanish
- Region where you are deployed: Danube Region (Budapest, Hungary)
- Write 3 words that define ‘European cooperation’ for you: development, ambition, strength



Priority 2

Boosting employment for young people in Europe





Being 'INTREPIDA' and audacious: Women-led businesses through cooperation

Spain and Portugal are working together to empower and promote the competitiveness of the SMEs created by women

By Chiara Scacchetti

Although the gender gap has not disappeared yet, according to GEM (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor), in 2019 women came to represent 48,4% of all the entrepreneurs in Spain. Among the factors that push this growth, GEM listed the contact with other entrepreneurs and the support of a positive cultural environment for women's entrepreneurship.

The Project INTREPIDA Plus (Internationalisation of the Entrepreneurs of Spain and Portugal towards Inclusion, Development and Alliances. Second Phase) meets these needs, as an initial part of the programme Interreg Spain-Portugal (POCTEP), financed through ERDF. Its aim is to empower and promote the competitiveness of the small and medium-sized women's enterprises in the cross-border territory of Andalusia, Algarve, and Alentejo,

promoting their internationalisation through new models of development and business' cooperation.

INTREPIDA Plus: a world of opportunities

Despite the pandemic of COVID 19, the project has organised four International Fora (2 in Spain and 2 in Portugal) involving women entrepreneurs from Spain and Portugal, giving them the opportunity to create networks, to collaborate, share their experiences, develop new ideas and learn important skills for their work. Several INTREPIDA meetings took place in the last years to give visibility to the enterprises, which were thus offering interesting talks and workshops in different fields, from art to sports, coaching, social projects, and others. Moreover, more than 1,700 businesswomen have been inserted in the [Entrepreneur's Guide of the project](#).

Dauntless and audacious women

INTREPIDA is not only an acronym: in Spanish, it also means dauntless, audacious, daring, and fearless. This was clearly shown during the IV Forum INTREPIDA Plus in Faro (Portugal) on 24-25 February 2022 and also in the many meetings that followed. Many women shared their experiences and talked about how they overcame the

difficulties and discrimination for being women. All of these women constitute an example for entrepreneurship: clever, creative, brave, strong, and determined but at the same time kind, delicate and nice. Their common quality? Being able to 'think out of the box'.



Networking among entrepreneurs during the IV Forum INTREPIDA Plus in Faro (Portugal) on 24 and 25 February 2022.



Entrepreneurs visiting Faro during the IV Forum INTREPIDA Plus.

Testimonial

Mamen Villalba, entrepreneur

Mamen Villalba worked for some years in a marketing agency. Following the crisis of 2008, she lost her job and she decided to open a blog to share her experience as a mother and designer. Through it, she started to work for events, and many entrepreneurs asked her to design their brands and websites: she thus created her enterprise, Blanco Ruso, to help other entrepreneurs in this task.

She had to face many difficulties during her journey, as the lack of financial resources and the need to combine family and work: “It is very hard if you have a short time to work on your project because you have to bring the kids at school, most of all without a family to support you”, she explains.

In 2019 she founded with other women entrepreneurs, the community Mujeres

Sobresalientes: We are all learners and teachers; there must be a collaboration between us rather than competition”. She dreams of creating an academy to help entrepreneurs to start or re-start their projects, “so that they can create a business in which they are free, independent, and have the lifestyle they want”.

What helped her most was to get in touch with other entrepreneurs, through INTREPIDA Plus project: “It gave me more visibility, allowing me to organise my first conference, collaborate with entrepreneurs not only in Seville and Spain but also at an international level, specifically with Portugal. It gave me that support and recognition that we all need at some point”, Mamen highlights.



Some products of the entrepreneurs exposed during the IV Forum INTREPIDA Plus: natural cosmetics, jewels, handmade cork products.

Being an IVY in this project

In the past, I have been leading a start-up during the Start-up Creation Lab organised by my university. Thanks to my experience as an IVY volunteer in INTREPIDA Plus, I will be more prepared in the future for similar experiences. I learned a lot about how an

entrepreneur should introduce her image and design her website to reach more customers, how to combine tradition and innovation and adapt to local needs and features, how to collaborate and create business networks, and much more. Moreover, INTREPIDA gave me the chance to organise Citizens' Engagement Activity in the Doñana National Park.



The concert of the Portuguese harpist Helena Madeira, promoted by INTREPIDA Plus project.

More information:

<http://tresculturas.org/proyecto/intrepida>



Chiara Scacchetti

- Age: 26
- Nationality: Italian
- Region where you are deployed: Sevilla (Spain)
- Write 3 words that define 'European cooperation' for you: networks, internationalisation, opportunities

Priority 3
**Simplification of
rules and better
communication via
digital tools**





Boosting social inclusion and mental health

The project Salute-Zdravstvo has simplified the access to health services in the cross-border area of Gorizia (Italy), Šempeter (Slovenia) and Nova Gorica (Slovenia)

By Nicole Meneghetti

First of all, let me introduce myself! I'm Nicole and I started my IVY experience in March 2022, for six months. I'm now volunteering as an IVY reporter at the cooperation programme Interreg Italia-Slovenia in Trieste. I was born here and I am bilingual. It is a pleasure for me to have this IVY experience and be active in the area where I was born.

The year 2022 is known as the European Year of Youth, which means that this year the spotlight shines on the European youth. The goal is to focus on and build a better future that is greener, better, more inclusive, and digital.

It is very important for Interreg to involve young people and include them in its projects and programmes all around Europe. Unfortunately,

if young people do not feel interested, it is mostly because they do not know about it. As written in the 'Manifesto for Young People by Young People to Shape the European Cooperation Policy', it is key for Interreg to reach out to the youth by using simple and catchy language via digital tools. As I am working on a cooperation programme I see that Interreg is really working to meet this goal; for example, in the last year, the Interreg Italia-Slovenia programme opened its Instagram and Facebook profiles.



Social inclusion and health

In addition to involving young people, many Interreg projects are working to monitor and help people (not only youngsters) to include themselves in society, especially in cross-border areas. This is vital when talking about health. The project Salute-Zdravstvo aims to strengthen the offer and improve the quality of social and health services for the population living in the cross-border area of Gorizia (Italy), Šempeter (Slovenia) and Nova Gorica (Slovenia). Two of the main goals of the project are social inclusion and mental health. The project has a duration of 48 months and this year it's coming to an end.



A workshop of the project.

A Single Centre for cross-border health reservations

The project involves the establishment of joint cross-border medical teams in the field of mental health, autism, and normal pregnancy. It has simplified procedures and made it easier to access health services on the Slovenia-Italy border with the creation, on an experimental basis, of a Single Centre for cross-border reservations (the cross-border booking system, known as CUP). From the perspective of integration with the social-assistance sphere, the project dedicates a pilot action to cross-border services and interventions for the inclusion of vulnerable groups in the population.



Info Point in Nova Gorica.

Impact and main results

- Greater skills and qualifications of cross-border teams in the health and social field.
- Analysis of the state of the art, methodologies, and clinical, administrative, and legal aspects in the health system in Slovenia and Italy and in the social-welfare sector.
- Comparative analysis of the two health and social care systems (Slovenian and Italian).
- Establishment of cross-border interdisciplinary teams and working groups.
- Administrative and technical solutions to create cross-border health services.
- Cross-border booking system (CUP) for health and social services.
- Infrastructures dedicated to cross-border services.



The project didn't bring just new social services, but it contributed to the development of new infrastructure.

Testimonial

Alessandro Calligaro

This young boy from Gorizia benefitted from the project Salute-Zdravstvo. He is now collaborating with Radio Fragola, always as part of a work grant project.

“After the end of high school and before getting to know the project, I had a period of crisis in which I wanted to go to university, but I couldn't because of problems related to anxiety. In general, I had great difficulty in relating to everything concerned with the world outside my home and my parents. I was unable to enter a shop, make calls or answer the phone, even walking down the street was difficult for me”, Alessandro explains.

“The experience of the work grant within the project Salute-Zdravstvo allowed me to learn more about my territory and my city. I discovered a world of services and people that was previously unknown to me due to my reluctance to leave my home and experience the area around me. It gave me a new, more productive routine, as well as

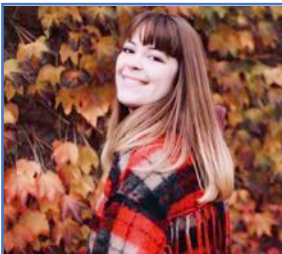
the ability to move more and experience new realities”, he says.

This experience was also important on a professional note. Alessandro shares that “the start of the project represented an important step in my individual journey. It allowed me to face my first real work experience, challenge myself with new responsibilities, meet colleagues and operators and be able to interact with them in a positive way. I have acquired a new awareness of my abilities and this gives me confidence in undertaking new projects related to my training in the future”.

Finally, this project allowed him to live more completely and healthily in the territory that before he was not even interested in knowing. “I would like anyone, not just those who find themselves in a situation of difficulty or in which they feel stuck, to know better the services that the city offers and to interface better with the whole territory, even beyond the border”, he concludes.


More information:

<https://www.ita-slo.eu/en/salute-zdravstvo>



Nicole Meneghetti

- **Age:** 23
- **Nationality:** Italian
- **Region where you are deployed:** Trieste, Italy
- **Write 3 words that define 'European cooperation' for you:** communication, solidarity, inclusion



Priority 4
Addressing Climate Change issues for a better future





Energy saving through 'Smart Living' solutions

The most efficient kilowatt-hour is the one that is not consumed.
With this belief, Estonia and Latvia are collaborating
on an energy efficiency project

By Dana Liniņa

At the end of February 2022, I took the opportunity to contribute to the Interreg initiative of 'Addressing Climate Change issues for a better future'. I started volunteering in the Estonia-Latvia cooperation programme, where I could work on the project Smart Living. Before this, I have never really been interested in an eco-friendly lifestyle as such and this project has opened a new perspective on the importance of energy efficiency.

The goal of this project is to raise public awareness about environmentally-friendly lifestyles and the smart use of energy resources in Latvia and Estonia. To educate and encourage society to change their daily routine in favour of energy efficiency, Green Tech Cluster organises seminars, workshops and introduces the Smart Living interactive tool to households and real

estate managers, as well as to owners of industrial and commercial businesses.

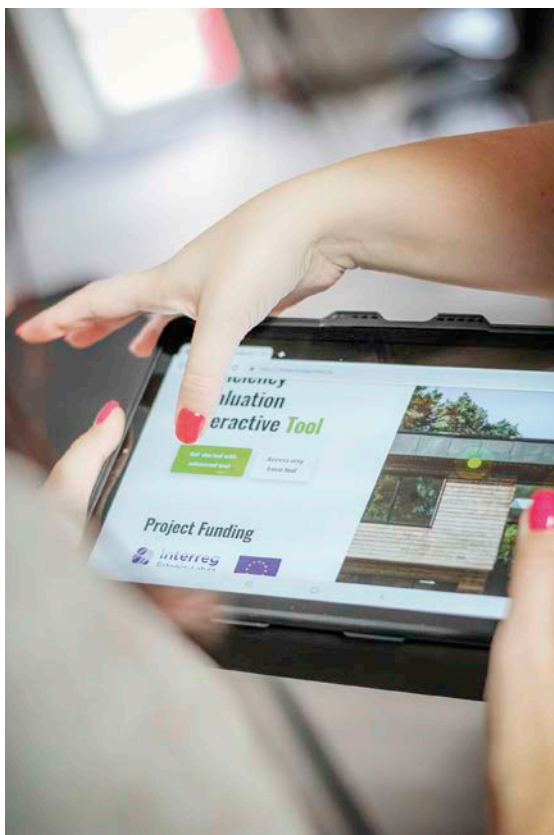
The project began in March 2020 and the interactive Smart Living tool that helps to understand the energy usage in one's household and gives advice to make it more energy efficient, is up and running since September 2020. The team has invested many resources, time, and energy to educate society, adapt their lifestyles to an eco-friendlier routine, and be an inspiration to others.

Promoting an energy efficient way of life!

I have the opportunity to work alongside one of the main drivers and enthusiasts of the Smart Living

project activities -Ieva Meikšāne. She is a member of the board of Green Tech Cluster and the head of Liepaja's Energy Efficiency Centre. In her daily routine she organises Smart Living seminars and webinars as well as participates in many other activities promoting an energy efficient way of life.

Ieva's day to day life is a great example and inspiration for everyone, who aims for an eco-friendlier lifestyle: starting with keeping up with the energy stock exchange prices and taking the responsibility upon herself to save energy usage and finishing with energy efficient light bulbs and kitchen equipment: "I have practice an energy-efficient lifestyle for more than 15 years and I can surely say - changing your daily routine - that's also smart living. I do laundry and dishes at night or on weekends when the energy prices are lower, my house has been upgraded to save energy, and everything I buy I plan on using long term to reduce waste quantity", she explains.

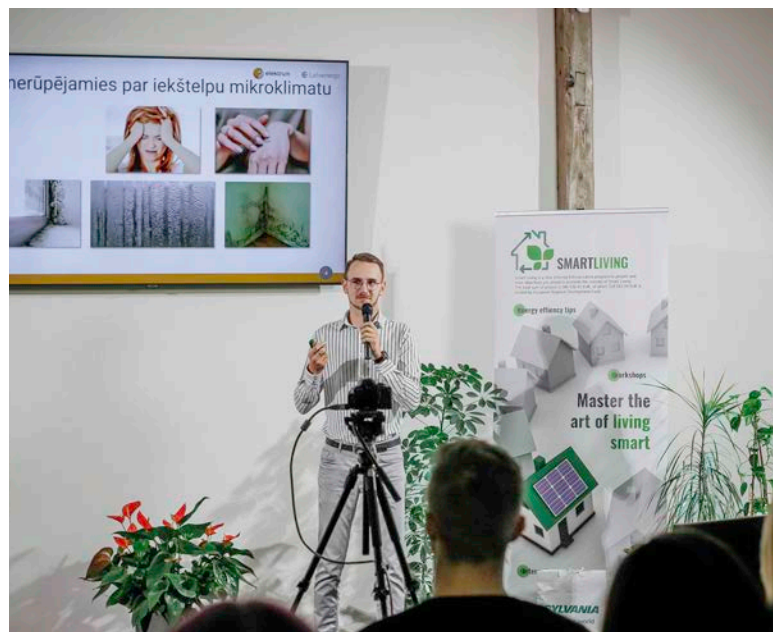


The 'Green box' house: a zero-energy building

The Smart Living project is operating on many activities to promote energy efficiency and one of them is the 'Green box' house project. While still in construction, the 'Green box' house has been upgraded with the newest technology available, collaborating with Green Tech Cluster members and other partners to make it a zero-energy building.

The building is created in collaboration with 'VIA-S modular houses'. The windows and doors are installed by the Green Tech Cluster member 'Arbo Windows', and the interior is equipped with 'Schneider Electric KNX' intelligent building control system which is connected with lighting and is both intelligently controllable and adjustable.

"There will be 'Elektrum' solar panels on the roof, which will be used to generate electricity for self-consumption, and this building will not consume a single kilowatt-hour from the grid during the year. The building will be used for rent, workshops, and those who are green-minded," says Ieva Meikšāne.



To maintain Smart Living's activity and popularity among listeners, the project organises different seminars and webinars about energy efficiency to inform people of the benefits and importance of environmentally friendly use of energy, as well as to introduce the society to the interactive 'Smart Living' tool. The seminars and webinars are divided by topicality to households and real estate managers, as well as for owners of industrial and commercial businesses. In total there are 15 events organised for households, 7 events for the energy community, one dissemination event in Latvia, and 4 additional events for households. From all events, 482 participants are involved from households and 174 participants from the energy community.

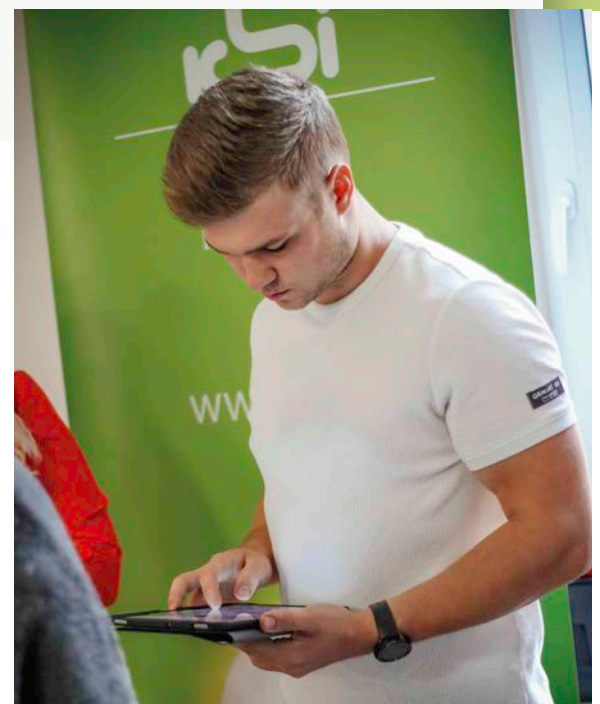
"Specific topics have been chosen for the seminars and workshops, which are of interest to both households and real estate managers because energy efficiency contributes to reducing resources, costs, and the achievement of long-term sustainability. The prices of energy resources around geopolitics are rising so it is important to promote self-consumption," comments Meikšāne, who adds that "there are a lot of different seminars going on and, for us to stand out and attract the audience, we need to offer relevant topics and engaging speakers. More than 500 people have participated in these seminars. Repeating names shows that people are participating in more than one event and are highly interested in changing something in their daily lives. The benefits for those who take part in the seminars are education and learning new topics that they did not know about before. We encourage companies to consider more energy-efficient innovations. Everyone can take something for themselves".

Ieva Meikšāne also emphasises that many webinars are organised together with Estonian partners, who also share their experiences: "I think it is interesting for listeners, as well as ourselves, to compare national experiences: what they do differently, what kind of challenges they handle, what are the support programs and requirements? Both countries benefit from this experience exchange".

AGENDA

- 10:00 AM
Smart Living interactive tool demonstration
(Imants Martinsons, Green Tech Cluster Latvia)
- 10:10 AM
Challenges for electric car sharing business in markets with underdeveloped charging infrastructure
(Māris Avotiņš, Fijsi)
- 10:40 AM
Elektrum Drive charging network - Trends, network development, solutions and services
(Ansis Valdoškis, Latvenergo)
- 11:05 AM
Elektrum Drive EV charging solution for multi-apartment houses, office buildings and private houses
(Mario Raestik, Elektrum Eesti OU)
- 11:30 AM
Existing charging network and future opportunities from a charging network operator's point of view
(Kārlis Mendziņš, Eleport)

Logos: inkeres, European Union, SMARTLIVING, Eleport, and other partners.



Agenda of the webinar 'Improving energy efficiency in households'.

Impact on the ground

As a result of the presentations in seminars, a total of 1,130 people have tried the Smart Living interactive tool themselves and 108 accounts have been created to keep up with their energy usage daily.

The tool allows getting to know one's energy efficiency, make conclusions and decide, what to do next. When the data of a household is calculated, the tool offers an option to get personalised help from energy specialists to seek specific solutions for an energy efficiency upgrade. Many people have opted for more efficient heating systems with the help of the Smart Living tool and everyone can use the tool repeatedly, compare their results over time and see the difference.

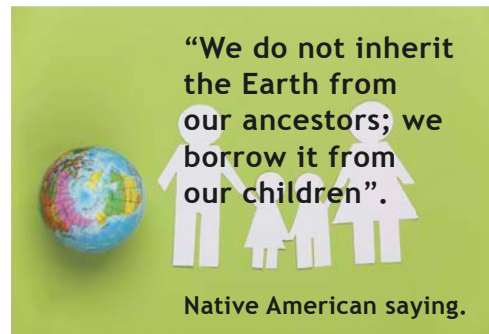
Think globally, act locally

Besides the tools used and webinars attended, it is globally important for every human being on earth to pay attention to their energy usage. We can all practise small changes in our lives as consumers and responsible users (acting locally) to globally

change the world together. It is estimated that if 10% of mobile phone users unplugged the charger when the phone is charged, 60,000 households would be saved electricity for a whole year.

“Start small, for example, switch off the lights when leaving a room. The most efficient kilowatt-hour is the one that is not consumed” highlights Ieva Meikšāne. “The same goes with sustainability. Pay attention to what you buy, will it be used once or long term, because the moment you buy something, it automatically becomes a waste, because sooner or later it will be dumped in the landfill site. Only together we can make an impact”, she concludes.

At the end of the day, the Smart Living idea goes beyond seminars, webinars, and practical activities in favour of energy efficiency. It's a lifestyle where you keep in mind that every step you take leaves a footprint and the goal of living in harmony with nature is possible only if we work together as a human race. Smart Living is about unity and small steps to take each day, and that is exactly what the team of the project is transmitting to the world.




More information:
www.livingsmart.io



Dana Liniņa

- Age: 25
- Nationality: Latvian
- Region where you are deployed: Liepāja, Latvia
- Write 3 words that define 'European cooperation' for you: teamwork, unity, efficiency



Priority 5
Boosting citizens' engagement in policy-making & implementation





Involving citizens in the shaping of an eco-sustainable future

The objective of the MYSEA project is to fulfill the labour market with people trained in agri-food and waste management industries

By Brunilda Elezi

Given demographic changes, skill mismatches, gender gaps and the persistence of certain socio-cultural norms, the Euro-Mediterranean Region faces high rates of youth unemployment, mainly NEETs (Not [engaged] in Education, Employment or Training), and women. These are underrepresented in the labour market. At the same time, the rapid increase in sustainable and eco-responsible innovations in the agri-food and waste management sectors requires new occupational profiles

MYSEA: promoting skills, employment and awareness in the blue and green economy

To achieve this goal, the MYSEA project aims to identify existing and emerging skills and

professional needs through oriented training, coaching and mentoring, while at the same time involving Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions and enterprises encouraging sector-skills alliances through apprenticeships, traineeships and on-the-job training.

This cooperation project among five countries under the ENI CBC MED programme (Italy, Greece, Lebanon, Tunisia, and Jordan) works to educate 3 groups of citizens to professional levels; young people from 18 to 24 years old, NEETs up to 30 years old, and women of all ages with few career opportunities. Gaining professional training and qualifications gives them the chance to be involved in local governance through the agri-food and waste management industries.

Training modules

MYSEA has already presented a product conducted by the University of Palermo: the cross-border research. This detailed research investigates, in each partner country and at transnational level, the employment situation in the project's key sectors, to support evidence and provide further help in building the training modules.

The project aims to train 200 individuals from each partner country. The training modules will be done by TVET institutions chosen in each partner country, and the aim is to implement the training

by September/October 2022, completing it by the beginning of summer 2023. Three oriented training curricula will be developed: transversal skills, digital skills and sector skills. These will also be supported by the launch of 3 associations in each country. The 3 associations will provide 70 hours of mentoring and 1 training workshop on entrepreneurship. Support will also be provided by implementing micro-learning modules for the management of the social media platforms. MYSEA's ultimate goal is to be able to close the gap that currently exists in the labour market in the agri-food and waste management sectors of each partner country.



Interview with

Francesco Quagliani

Project manager junior of CIES, the Italian partner of Lazio Region



How long have you been working on this project and what has been happening until now?

I have been working on this project since its beginning on 20 October 2020. We have just completed the first year of the project in which a series of activities took place, such as setting up the framework and the partnership. Some strategic events took place, like the kick-off meeting and the open day in each of the partner countries. Currently, we are entering the core phase of the project, which is the exact point at which the beneficiaries are going to be selected. Cross-Border research was done

for this purpose by the University of Palermo, to understand the needs and where the gaps to be filled are in each partner country. The Mid-Term event has just taken place, and with all these activities I believe we are moving forward at the right pace with the purpose of the implementation of the core of MYSEA.

Why were the agri-food and waste management industries chosen for this project?

Because the world is moving in that direction and an industrial revolution is in sight in this area. We believe eco-sustainability is the future. The objective of the project is to provide the labour market with people who have abilities and training in these areas - people who want to represent the most eco-sustainable future we can have.

How was it for you to participate in the mid-term event?

The event was important in terms of the visibility of the project. High-ranking stakeholders participated, particularly from the Jordanian side, but the biggest purpose of this event was the possibility it provided of explaining and disseminating the project to the public.

What is the expected impact for the beneficiaries and citizens of the countries taking part in the project?

The expected impact is to fill the gap that exists between school and professional training, and what the two sectors involved require. The market asks for some things, but young people and NEETs can't find work because they don't have the right training. So, the expected impact is to bridge the gap between demand and supply in these two sectors. The target groups are those in the vulnerable categories. As stated also by the Cross-Border research, women in the Mediterranean area have unfortunately had higher unemployment levels than men for many years now, and the young generations are suffering, especially from the effects that COVID-19 has had.

What are the biggest challenges of MYSEA and how do you plan to tackle them?

Operating in the Mediterranean, where high rates of unemployment are the default -in fact, they are among the highest in the world. So, the project was born from a need to escape from a difficult situation, and the goal is to work around vulnerable target groups. To that end, I believe that we have a stable work plan and an even stronger partnership, and we are ready to work towards the ultimate goal, which is to equip these people to increase their employment opportunities.

Do you have any other insight on the project or personal thoughts?

I think that it is very important that we are taking a common approach to a common problem for the partner countries, and facing a common challenge that then adapts to local needs. The fact that different realities, countries and stakeholders are collaborating on a common challenge is part of the spirit of the ENI CBC MED, and we are confident that cooperation is the way to go to find solutions to common problems.



Real cooperation among the partners involved in MYSEA

As an IVY volunteer for MYSEA, I participated in one of the most important events of this project in Jordan. It was structured on a series of meetings that took place in 24-27 May 2022, with an important high point on 26 May: the mid-term event. This week of meetings among partners concluded with

the participation of many actors and associate partners from each country. Participants had the option of joining either in person or online. More than 200 people (some physically present, some online) attended this event, where the national Jordan press was also present.



The representatives of each partner country participating in a series of meetings on 24 May 2022.



The mid-term event (26 May 2022).

The purpose of this week was to assure true cooperation between partners for the second stage of the implementation of the project, take important technical and financial decisions for the future, and, last but not least, ensure that the project reaches its target group and intended beneficiaries.

The partners were able to discuss and take important decisions on the future of the project, such as identifying the actual TVET institutions that will help in the following months with developing and giving life to the training. The series of round

table meetings dedicated to the Transnational Project Management Unit (TPMU) and the Steering Committee (SC) were very productive. Every decision taken was made in the spirit of cooperation and collaboration between partners.

As mentioned by the Lebanese Development Network in the article published on 29 May 2022: *“MYSEA Project seeks to develop training oriented to both sectors and strengthen local governance and sector-skills alliances between economic actors and TVET institutions to align the education curricula with sector’s needs”*.

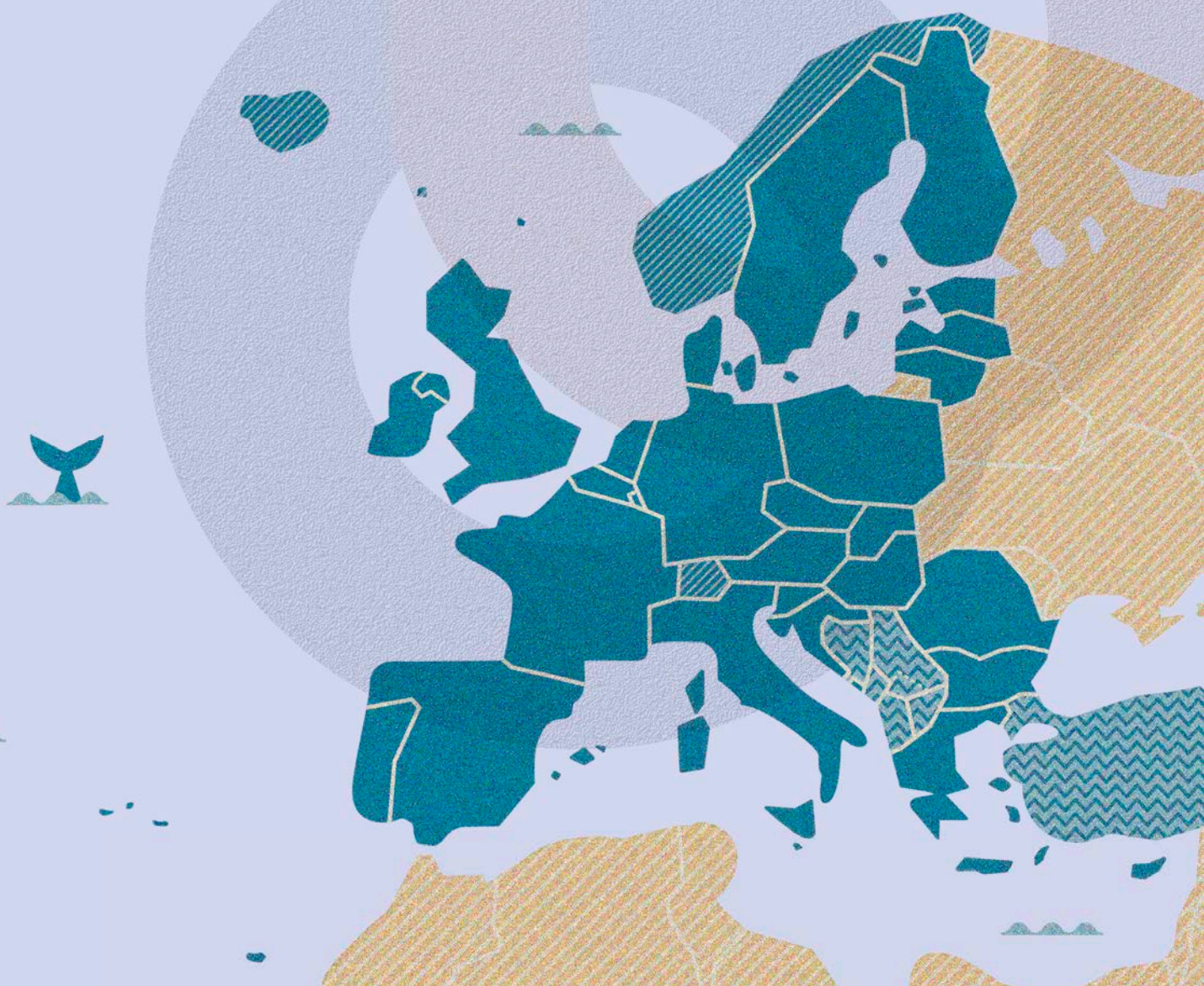
More information:

<https://www.enicbcmcd.eu/projects/mysea>



Brunilda Elezi

- Age: 27
- Nationality: Albanian
- Region where you are deployed: Lazio, Italy
- Write 3 words that define ‘European cooperation’ for you: sustainability, ecology, wellbeing



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