

The project « Debating Europe Cities & Refugees » was funded with the support of the European Union under the Programme "Europe for Citizens"

Participation: The project involved 849.206 citizens from across Europe.

Location/ Dates: The events took place online and in 4 European cities between 06/10/2016 and 31/08/2017.

Short description:

The project consisted of 25 online debates and 4 “real-life” debates (events 6, 11, 16 and 26) whereby each debate focused on the reception and integration approach of a European city. Questions and comments from European citizens were put to a selection of local politicians, civil society organisations and experts.

Event 1

Participation: The event involved 43.915 citizens, involving participants from at least 15 EU countries including the United Kingdom, Belgium, Greece, Germany, Ireland, Spain, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, France, Romania, Slovenia, Austria, Croatia and Czechia.

Location / Dates: The event took place online, from 06/10/2016 to 31/08/2017.

Short description: The aim of the online debate “Do refugees take away social housing from locals?” was to provoke a discussion on whether refugees take away social housing opportunities in cities from local populations. The event focused on the city of Bristol (UK) as an example. We put questions from our community of citizens to the following policymakers –

- Anthony Negus, Liberal Democrat Councillor for Cotham Ward in Bristol, Chair of the Bristol City Council Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission
- Clare Campion-Smit, Councillor Bristol Mayor's Office

Event 2

Participation: The event involved 81.149 citizens, involving participants from at least 15 EU countries including the Netherlands, Belgium, the United Kingdom, Greece, Portugal, Germany, Romania, Austria, Poland, Italy, Croatia, Bulgaria, Spain, France and Denmark.

Location / Dates: The event took place online, from 07/11/2016 to 31/08/2017.

Short description: The aim of the online debate “Should refugees take mandatory “Western values” classes?” was to provoke a discussion on whether classes on cultural values should be offered to refugees. The event focused on the city of Helsinki (FI) as an example. We put questions from our community of citizens to the following policymakers –

- Anu Riila, Senior Planning Officer, Helsinki City Executive Office, Economic Development, Immigration and Employment Services Division

Event 3

Participation: The event involved 59.603 citizens, involving participants from at least 15 EU countries including Belgium, the United Kingdom, Italy, Hungary, Germany, Greece, France, Croatia, Austria, Romania, Portugal, Denmark, Estonia, Spain and Ireland.

Location / Dates: The event took place online, from 02/11/2016 to 31/08/2017.

Short description: The aim of the online debate “Would you host a refugee if you were paid?” was to provoke a discussion on whether refugees should be housed with local families. The event focused on the city of Milan (IT) as an example. We put questions from our community of citizens to the following experts –

- Alberto Mossino, President, Migrant Integration and Welcoming Project (PIAM)
- Matteo Bassoli, co-founder and member of the board of Benvenuti Rifugiati ('Welcome Refugees')

Event 4

Participation: The event involved 25.909 citizens, involving participants from at least 15 EU countries including Belgium, the United Kingdom, Spain, Italy, France, Germany, Netherlands, Portugal, Denmark, Austria, Ireland, Romania, Bulgaria, Finland and Greece.

Location / Dates: The event took place online, from 28/11/2016 to 31/08/2017.

Short description: The aim of the online debate "Will the refugee crisis boost Europe's economy?" was to provoke a discussion on the impact of the refugee crisis on Europe's economy. The event focused on the city of Vienna (AT) as an example. We put questions from our community of citizens to the following expert–

- Jonathan Portes, Director, National Institute of Economic and Social Research (NIESR)

Event 5

Participation: The event involved 28.752 citizens, involving participants from at least 15 EU countries including Belgium, the United Kingdom, Greece, France, Denmark, Germany, Croatia, Slovenia, Spain, Poland, Romania, Ireland, Malta, the Netherlands and Slovakia.

Location / Dates: The event took place online, from 01/12/2016 to 31/08/2017.

Short description: The aim of the online debate "Should asylum seekers' assets be seized to pay for their housing?" was to provoke a discussion on whether refugees' assets could be seized to pay for their housing. The event focused on the city of Copenhagen (DK) as an example. We put questions from our community of citizens to the following experts –

- Eugenio Ambrosi, Regional Director EU, Norway and Switzerland, International Organization for Migration
- Jonas Christoffersen, Executive Director, Danish Institute for Human Rights

Event 6

Participation: This live event involved 100 from Germany and reached 26.700 citizens from across Europe.

Location / Dates: The event took place at the Hertie School of Governance in Berlin, Germany, on 24/04/2017.

Short description: This event was a "real-life" debate on the European's sentiment towards illegal migration of refugees. The title of the debate was "Are Europeans becoming indifferent to migrant deaths?" Taking part in the discussion, and answering questions from the public, were Julia Black, Project Coordinator at the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Başak Çalı, Professor of International Law at the Hertie School of Governance, Laurent Muschel, Director for Migration and Protection at the European Commission's DGI for Home Affairs, Tankred Stöbe, a member of the International Board of Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) and Ralph Wilde, Member of the Migration Research Unit of the Faculty of Laws at University College London (UCL).

Event 7

Participation: The event involved 27.104 citizens, involving participants from at least 15 EU countries including Belgium, the United Kingdom, Greece, France, the Netherlands, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Italy, Portugal, Romania, Bulgaria, Spain, Ireland and Czechia.

Location / Dates: The event took place online, from 12/01/2017 to 31/08/2017.

Short description: The aim of the online debate "Should refugee children be educated in their native language?" was to provoke a discussion on refugees and education. The event focused on the city of Munich (DE) as an example. We put questions from our community of citizens to the following policymakers and experts–

- Kristina Cunningham, Head of the Multilingualism Policy Sector, European Commission
- Sophie Engel, Head of Teaching Programme, Goethe Institute in Munich
- Annette Korntheuer, City of Munich

Event 8

Participation: The event involved 47.631 citizens, involving participants from at least 15 EU countries

including the United Kingdom, Belgium, Italy, Sweden, Hungary, Spain, France, Poland, Greece, the Netherlands, Austria, Romania, Germany, Portugal and Ireland.

Location / Dates: The event took place online, from 09/01/2017 to 31/08/2017.

Short description: The aim of the online debate “Can immigration defuse Europe’s time bomb?” was to provoke a discussion on whether refugees could be the answer to Europe’s ageing population. The event focused on the city of Rome (IT) as an example. We put questions from our community of citizens to the following policymakers and experts –

- Sandra Rainero, Policy Advisor on Migration, Youth and Social Innovation, URBACT
- Giuseppe Gesano, Associate Researcher, Institute of Research on Population and Social Policies – National Council of Research (CNR-IRPPS)
- Herwig Immervoll, Senior Economist and Head of Employment-oriented Social Policies, OECD

Event 9

Participation: The event involved 33.438 citizens, involving participants from at least 15 EU countries including Greece, the United Kingdom, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Cyprus, Croatia, Ireland, France, the Netherlands, Spain, Portugal, Austria, Poland and Romania.

Location / Dates: The event took place online, from 19/01/2017 to 31/08/2017.

Short description: The aim of the online debate “Should asylum seekers be allowed to work during their application?” was to provoke a discussion on asylum seekers’ right to work. The event focused on the city of Malmö (SW) as an example. We put questions from our community of citizens to the following policymakers and experts –

- Ola Nord, Head of Office, City of Malmö EU Office
- George Joseph, Caritas Sweden

Event 10

Participation: The event involved 24.013 citizens, involving participants from at least 15 EU countries including the United Kingdom, Belgium, Netherlands, Germany, Spain, Sweden, Greece, Ireland, Denmark, Romania, France, Croatia, Portugal, Malta and Austria.

Location / Dates: The event took place online, from 31/01/2017 to 31/08/2017.

Short description: The aim of the online debate “What’s the best way to help refugees integrate?” was to provoke a discussion on methods of integration. The event focused on the city of Brussels (BE) as an example. We put questions from our community of citizens to the following experts –

- Sayf Shemsuddin Hamid, Iraqi refugee
- Zaid Khalid Mahmood, Syrian refugee, part of the Refugees Got Talent project
- Emmanuelle Ghislain, Communication Manager, DUO for a JOB

Event 11

Participation: This live event involved 60 citizens from Malta and reached 10.212 citizens from across Europe.

Location / Dates: The event took place in Valletta, Malta, on 17/08/2017.

Short description: This event was a “real-life” debate, organised in partnership with Migrant Network and Leading Talks, on best practices when it comes to the integration of refugees. The title of the debate was “How can Europe best integrate refugees and migrants?” Taking part in the discussion, and answering questions from the public, were Claire Courteille-Mulder, Director of the Brussels Office of the International Labour Organisation, Catherine Woollard, Secretary General of the European Council on Refugees and Exiles, Antoine Salvary, Deputy Head of Unit of the Legal Migration and Integration Department at the European Commission and Romain Gustot, Junior Project Officer MIEUX at the International Center for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)

Event 12

Participation: The event involved 47.570 citizens, involving participants from at least 15 EU countries including United Kingdom, Romania, Belgium, Greece, Portugal, France, Italy, Hungary, Bulgaria, Spain, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, Cyprus and Poland.

Location / Dates: The event took place online, from 07/02/2017 to 31/08/2017.

Short description: The aim of the online debate “How can we stop asylum seekers ending up homeless?” was to provoke a discussion on housing of refugees. The event focused on the city of Leeds (UK) as an example. We put questions from our community of citizens to the following experts –

- Jon Beech, Director, Leeds Asylum Seekers Support Network
- John Hebden, Founder, Abigail Housing

Event 13

Participation: The event involved 47.612 citizens, involving participants from at least 15 EU countries including Romania, United Kingdom, Belgium, Greece, Germany, Spain, Netherlands, Sweden, Italy, Czechia, Poland, France, Portugal, Denmark and Hungary.

Location / Dates: The event took place online, from 21/02/2017 to 31/08/2017.

Short description: The aim of the online debate “Why do more people volunteer to help refugees in some cities?” was to provoke a discussion on volunteer work related to reception and integration of refugees. The event focused on the city of Leipzig (DE) as an example. We put questions from our community of citizens to the following policymaker and expert –

- Thomas Fabian, Deputy Mayor of Leipzig
- Mareike Geiling, co-founder of Flüchtlinge Willkommen (“Refugees Welcome”)

Event 14

Participation: The event involved 37.533 citizens, involving participants from at least 15 EU countries including Romania, Belgium, Greece, Germany, the United Kingdom, Italy, Spain, Netherlands, France, Poland, Portugal, Denmark, Malta, Bulgaria and Czechia.

Location / Dates: The event took place online, from 28/02/2017 to 31/08/2017.

Short description: The aim of the online debate “Can Cologne rebuild trust after the New Year’s Eve assaults?” was to provoke a discussion on trust between refugees and local populations. The event focused on the city of Cologne (DE) as an example. We put questions from our community of citizens to the following policymakers and expert–

- Elizaveta Khan, Managing Director of Integrationshaus e.V.
- Roger Beckamp, Member of the AfD in the Cologne City Council
- Harald Rau, Deputy of the City of Cologne for Social, Integration and Environment

Event 15

Participation: The event involved 20.086 citizens, involving participants from at least 15 EU countries including Belgium, Greece, the United Kingdom, Portugal, Germany, Italy, France, Czechia, Spain, Ireland, Romania, Finland, Hungary, Netherlands and Poland.

Location / Dates: The event took place online, from 15/03/2017 to 31/08/2017.

Short description: The aim of the online debate “Does housing asylum seekers apart from locals increase tensions?” was to provoke a discussion on resettlement of refugees in cities. The event focused on the city of Berlin (DE) as an example. We put questions from our community of citizens to the following policymakers –

- Michael Müller, Governing Mayor of Berlin
- Andreas Germershausen, Commissioner of the Berlin Senate for Integration and Migration
- Klaus Lederer, Mayor of Berlin and Senator for Culture and Europe

Event 16

Participation: This live event involved 100 citizens from Budapest and reached 16.044 citizens from across Europe.

Location / Dates: The event took place in Budapest, Hungary, on 11/08/2017.

Short description: This event was a “real-life” debate, organised in partnership with the Millennium Institute (Prospect Hungary), on best practices when it comes to the integration of refugees. The title of the debate was “Is it time for Hungary to change its approach towards refugees?” Taking part in the discussion and answering questions from the public were Júlia Iván, Director of Amnesty International in Hungary and Balázs Orbán, Director of the Migration Research Institute. The debate was moderated by András Pulai, Director of the Millennium Institute (Prospect Hungary).

Event 17

Participation: The event involved 12.515 citizens, involving participants from at least 15 EU countries including Belgium, the United Kingdom, France, Finland, Ireland, Netherlands, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Sweden, Denmark, Greece, Austria, Romania and Slovenia.

Location / Dates: The event took place online, from 06/04/2017 to 31/08/2017.

Short description: The aim of the online debate “Should the EU compensate cities for hosting refugees?” was to provoke a discussion on compensation to cities and communities who host refugees. The event focused on the city of Tampere (FI) as an example. We put questions from our community of citizens to the following policymaker –

- Marja Nyrhinen, Head Coordinator of Immigration Affairs, City of Tampere

Event 18

Participation: The event involved 30.842 citizens, involving participants from at least 15 EU countries including Portugal, United Kingdom, Belgium, Greece, Germany, Netherlands, France, Romania, Sweden, Spain, Italy, Czechia, Poland, Bulgaria and Slovenia.

Location / Dates: The event took place online, from 20/04/2017 to 31/08/2017.

Short description: The aim of the online debate “Is it wrong for refugees to want to go where jobs are?” was to provoke a discussion on the distribution of refugees in Europe. The event focused on the city of Lisbon (PT) as an example. We put questions from our community of citizens to the following policymakers and experts –

- Marina Watson Pelaez, a freelance journalist based in Lisbon
- Paul Ames, a freelance journalist based in Lisbon
- Sandra Batista, Coordinator of the Office of Events, Communications, and Information at the Portuguese government’s High Commission for Migration

Event 19

Participation: The event involved 43.677 citizens, involving participants from at least 15 EU countries including Greece, United Kingdom, Belgium, Portugal, Germany, Spain, Italy, France, Romania, Poland, Bulgaria, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands and Sweden.

Location / Dates: The event took place online, from 16/05/2017 to 31/08/2017.

Short description: The aim of the online debate “Can Greece cope both with austerity and the refugee crisis?” was to provoke a discussion on Greece’s position as a frontline country in the refugee crisis in a time when Greece is undergoing severe austerity measures. The event focused Lesbos (GR) as an example. We put questions from our community of citizens to the following policymaker –

- Angelos Chryssogelos, Teaching Fellow in International Relations & Politics, King’s College London

Event 20

Participation: The event involved 27.227 citizens, involving participants from at least 15 EU countries including Greece, Belgium, United Kingdom, Poland, Spain, Italy, Sweden, Germany, Portugal, Netherlands, Romania, Malta, Cyprus, France and Ireland.

Location / Dates: The event took place online, from 06/06/2017 to 31/08/2017.

Short description: The aim of the online debate “Is the refugee crisis boosting the far right?” was to provoke a discussion on the link between the refugee crisis and the rise of public support for far-right parties. The event focused on the city of Malmö (SW) as an example. We put questions from our community of citizens to the following expert –

- Anders Hellström, Senior Lecturer, Malmö University

Event 21

Participation: The event involved 49.814 citizens, involving participants from at least 15 EU countries including United Kingdom, Czechia, Belgium, Poland, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Greece, Romania, Ireland, France, Spain and Croatia.

Location / Dates: The event took place online, from 19/06/2017 to 31/08/2017.

Short description: The aim of the online debate “Should the EU sanction Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic for refusing refugees?” was to provoke a discussion on how the EU should deal with countries who fail to meet their obligations under the EU’s relocation plan. The event focused on the city of Warsaw (PL) as an example. We put questions from our community of citizens to the following policymaker –

- Andrzej Porawski, Executive Director, Association of Polish Cities

Event 22

Participation: The event involved 34.188 citizens, involving participants from at least 15 EU countries including Belgium, United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Netherlands, Denmark, France, Poland, Hungary, Malta, Czechia, Greece and Ireland.

Location / Dates: The event took place online, from 27/06/2017 to 31/08/2017.

Short description: The aim of the online debate “Why are Europeans so scared of refugees?” was to provoke a discussion on the appropriate response of cities to refugees who have committed crimes. The event focused on the city of Aarhus (DK) as an example. We put questions from our community of citizens to the following expert –

- Jacob Lang, Local Activist

Event 23

Participation: The event involved 18.005 citizens, involving participants from at least 15 EU countries including Greece, United Kingdom, Malta, Belgium, Italy, Spain, Germany, Netherlands, Sweden, Poland, Denmark, Ireland, Portugal, Romania and Austria.

Location / Dates: The event took place online, from 13/07/2017 to 31/08/2017.

Short description: The aim of the online debate “Is Europe failing countries on the frontline of the refugee crisis?” was to provoke a discussion on the support that frontline countries receive from the EU with regards to border control, the reception and accommodation of refugees. The event focused on the city of Valletta (Malta) as an example. We put questions from our community of citizens to the following policymakers –

- Jean-Pierre Gauci, Director and Founder, People for Change Foundation, Research Fellow British Institute of International and Comparative Law (BIICL)

Event 24

Participation: The event involved 12.644 citizens, involving participants from at least 15 EU countries including Austria, United Kingdom, Greece, Italy, Belgium, Ireland, Denmark, France, Portugal, Spain, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Cyprus and Finland.

Location / Dates: The event took place online, from 16/08/2017 to 31/08/2017.

Short description: The aim of the online debate “How can European countries protect unaccompanied refugee children?” was to provoke a discussion on the thousands of unaccompanied children who arrive to Europe. The event focused on the city of Vienna (AT) as an example. We put questions from our community of citizens to the following policymakers –

- Claire Healy, Research Officer, International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)
- Peter Hacker, Refugee Coordinator, City of Vienna

Event 25

Participation: The event involved 7.354 citizens, involving participants from at least 15 EU countries including Belgium, United Kingdom, Greece, Italy, Romania, Finland, Poland, Hungary, France, Spain, Denmark, Netherlands, Portugal, Cyprus and Czechia.

Location / Dates: The event took place online, from 21/08/2017 to 31/08/2017.

Short description: The aim of the online debate “Should Europe have a common coastguard?” was to provoke a discussion on border control in the Mediterranean region. The event focused on the city of Lampedusa (IT) as an example. We put questions from our community of citizens to the following experts –

- Judith Sunderland, Associate Director Europe and Central Asia Division, Human Rights Watch
- Marco Rotunno, Communication / PI Associate for Sicily, UNHCR Italy

Event 26

Participation: This live event involved 100 citizens in Brussels and reached 7.863 citizens from across Europe.

Location / Dates: The event took place at the University Foundation (Rue d’Egmont 11) in Brussels, Belgium, on 30/08/2017.

Short description: This event was a “real-life” debate, organised in partnership with the Young European Leadership (EYL), on best practices when it comes to the integration of refugees. The title of the debate was “How can Europe make it easier for migrants and refugees to integrate?” Taking part in the discussion and answering questions from the public were Silvan Agius, Director of Human Rights and Integration at

the Ministry for Social Dialogue and Civil Liberties of Malta, Dr. Maria Pisani, senior lecturer at University of Malta and co-founder of the Integra Foundation, Mohammed Hassan, founding member of the youth refugee organisation Spark15 in Malta, and Nagmeldeen Arbab, member of the Sudanese Migrants Association.

Event 27

Participation: The event involved 8.132 citizens, involving participants from at least 15 EU countries including Belgium, United Kingdom, France, Portugal, Greece, Germany, Netherlands, Cyprus, Spain, Bulgaria, Denmark, Sweden, Slovakia, Czechia and Croatia.

Location / Dates: The event took place online, from 04/05/2017 to 31/08/2017..

Short description: The aim of the online debate “Is there a conflict between helping refugees and helping your own citizens?” was to provoke an ethical discussion on the line between helping refugees and helping the local population. The event focused on the city of Gdansk (PL) as an example. We put questions from our community of citizens to the following policymaker –

- Paweł Adamowicz, Mayor of Gdańsk

Event 28

Participation: The event involved 12.036 citizens, involving participants from at least 15 EU countries including United Kingdom, Belgium, Sweden, Hungary, Italy, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Netherlands, Spain, Portugal, Slovenia, Romania, Austria and Bulgaria.

Location / Dates: The event took place online, from 28/08/2017 to 31/08/2017.

Short description: The aim of the online debate “Should more European countries build fences to keep out refugees?” was to provoke a discussion on Hungary’s decision to build fences along its border. The event focused on the city of Röszke (PL) as an example. We put questions from our community of citizens to the following expert –

- Boldizsár Nagy, Associate Professor of International Relations, Central European University

Event 29

Participation: The event involved 7.729 citizens, involving participants from at least 15 EU countries including Belgium, United Kingdom, Spain, Greece, Netherlands, Slovenia, Germany, Finland, Romania, Sweden, Estonia, Hungary, Ireland, France and Italy.

Location / Dates: The event took place online, from 31/08/2017 to 31/08/2017.

Short description: The aim of the online debate “Should there be legal ways for refugees to enter Europe?” was to provoke a discussion on opening up borders to refugees who are fleeing persecution. The event focused on the city of Athens (GR) as an example. We put questions from our community of citizens to the following policymakers –

- Judith Sunderland, Associate Director of the Europe and Central Asia Division, Human Rights Watch
- Vasilis Papadopoulos, Coordinator of the Legal Unit of the Greek Council for Refugees