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 **active citizenship for social policies**

Twinning and partnerships in Europe

A practical handbook for Local Authorities



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For official information about the Europe for Citizens programme visit the web pages of the EACEA:

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/index_en.php



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Why a handbook on Europe for Citizens programme?

This handbook doesn't aim to replace the official programme guide, that is the first document to refer to in preparing a project; it is indeed an additional instrument with two main goals: first, to give you and your organisation the information you need to decide whether or not you would like to take part in a Europe for Citizens project; second, it aims to give you advice on how to apply for funding in order to carry out a successful project and twinning.

This handbook has been designed to help you avoid any possible frustration and problem, and to help make European cooperation work.

The information and advice in this handbook are meant to make it easier for your organisation to take part in a Twinning Partnership.

► **Chapter 1** of the handbook briefly presents the principles and organisation of the Europe for Citizens programme focusing on two specific actions:

- **Town twinning citizens' meetings.**
- **Networks of twinned towns.**

► **Chapter 2** guides you through the different phases of setting up a Europe for Citizens project

► **Chapter 3** gives you advice on how to carry it out.

You will also find an Annex, which provides a list of references and links.

To download the official programme guide:
http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/index_en.php

What is Europe for Citizens programme?

Established with the Decision 1904/2006/EC of 12 December 2006 for the period 2007-2013 it supports a wide range of activities and organisations promoting the “active European citizenship” and therefore the involvement of citizens and Civil Society Organisations in the process of European integration.

General goals of the programme:

- Giving citizens the opportunity to interact and participate in constructing an ever closer Europe, which is democratic and world-oriented, united in and enriched through its cultural diversity, thus developing citizenship of the European Union.
- Developing a sense of European identity, based on common values, history and culture.
- Fostering a sense of ownership of the European Union among its citizens.
- Enhancing tolerance and mutual understanding between European citizens, respecting and promoting cultural and linguistic diversity, while contributing to intercultural dialogue.

Specific goals of the programme to be pursued on a transnational basis:

- Bringing together people from local communities across Europe to share and exchange experiences, opinions and values, to learn from history and to build for the future.
- Fostering action, debate and reflection related to European citizenship and democracy, shared values, common history and culture through cooperation within civil society organisations at European level.
- Bringing Europe closer to its citizens by promoting Europe’s values and achievements, while preserving the memory of its past.
- Encouraging interaction between citizens and civil society organisations by all participating countries, contributing to intercultural dialogue and bringing to the fore both Europe’s diversity and unity, with particular attention to activities aimed at developing closer ties between citizens from Member States of the European Union as constituted on 30 April 2004 and those from Member States which have acceded since that date.

In preparing a project the promoters have to consider that it fits with the permanent thematic priorities of the programme and the annual thematic priorities that are year by year published on the website of the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency.

Permanent thematic priorities of the programme:

1. The future of the European Union and its basic values.
2. Active European Citizenship: civic participation and democracy in Europe.
3. Inter-cultural dialogue.
4. People’s wellbeing in Europe: employment, social cohesion and sustainable development.
5. Impact of EU policies in societies.



The programme Measure “Town Twinning Citizens Meetings”

The Citizens Meetings are international events that bring together citizens from different EU towns (at least 2 towns from 2 participating countries) in order to promote mutual knowledge, mutual understanding, exchange of different cultures, exchange of projects, practices and activities.

Town Twinning Citizens’ Meetings projects are expected to:

- Experience an active civic participation at local level based on a structured cooperation with the civil society. This can be achieved through the involvement of the local community in the planning and implementation of the project, and also volunteering as well as giving participants an active role during the event.
- Encourage citizens to become more involved at European level, thus contributing to the development of an active European citizenship. This can be achieved for example through

learning about participation of European citizens in the democratic life of the EU, discussing the equal opportunities in political life.

- Reinforce the participants’ commitment to European integration. This can be achieved exchanging ideas and experiences related to the priorities of the Programme; sharing the experience of concrete benefits of European integration at local and individual levels; experiencing cultural diversity and discovering a common cultural heritage in Europe; demonstrating solidarity and developing a feeling of belonging to the same community in Europe as a whole.



Example: Town Twinning to celebrate the European Year for Volunteerism

Venue of the activities: Oggiono Municipality, Italy, June 2011.

Invited towns: Municipality of Halásztelek (HU), Municipality of Leisnig (DE), Municipality of Nea Propontida (GR), Ajuntament D'Algaida (ES).

Description: The project promoted a long lasting network between the EU municipalities on the theme of active citizenship and volunteering, in order to facilitate the exchange of experiences, networking and implementation of new projects; it also promoted the concept and values of voluntary work in Europe.

The project focused in particular on the active role that youth can act at local level through voluntary activities and the importance and value these have for the local community.

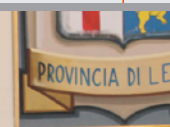
The debate have been centred on voluntarism as occasion of active youth training, and involvement in the local community, as important factor of active citizenship and personal responsibility.

The scope of the project meeting was to promote a first exchange of ideas and concrete ongoing activities in order to define joint voluntarism projects between partners for the future.

During the project events each partner presented to the others the best voluntary projects developed at local level and its own strategy to promote voluntarism.

The partners municipalities also deepened the possible synergies and the wide multiplier effect that can be achieved through the cooperation with private no-profit organisations at local level.

Finally the project was the occasion to sign the official town twinning between Oggiono (IT) and Halasztelek (HU), and to sign as well a work protocol on voluntarism between all the participating Municipalities.



The programme Measure “Networks of Twinned Towns”

The Networks of Twinned Towns are international projects that give to the local actors the opportunity to exchange ideas and practices on relevant EU issues of common interest in order to promote the development of thematic and long-lasting cooperation between towns in Europe.

The Commission supports the development of such networks, which are important for ensuring structured, intense and multifaceted cooperation.

Each project can last 24 months and envisage several meetings and events between the involved partners giving them the opportunity to deepen the reciprocal knowledge, develop common working methodologies and long lasting cooperation.

Networks of Twinned Towns' projects are expected to:

- Integrate a range of activities around the subject of common interest to be addressed in the context of the Programme's priorities and having relevance for European integration.
- Produce communication tools in the context of these events with the aim of promoting structured and sustainable thematic networking and disseminating the results of the actions.
- Have defined target groups for which the selected themes are particularly relevant and involve community members active in the subject area (i.e. experts, local associations, citizens and citizens' groups directly affected by the theme, etc.).
- Serve as a basis for future initiatives and actions between the towns involved, on the issues addressed or possibly on further issues of common interest.



Example: Cities and Regions for a Social Europe

Venue of the activities: Olmedo Municipality, Italy.

Project implementation period:

June 2010 - February 2012.

Invited towns: Town of Olmedo (ES), Town of Săcălășeni (RO), Town of Amfiklia (GR), Town of Cork (IE), Town of Amata (LV).

Description: EU co-operation project for the exchange of practices, policies, ideas, competence, particularly to face the current economical crisis that is causing mounting unemployment and poverty in many EU regions and local communities.

The project, through the high quality envisaged exchange activities, tried to answer the question: "how to face the poverty problems at a local level?".

It involved about 120 organisations coming from 6 different EU regions (municipalities, universities, private no-profit organisations), and brought together a large target group of people/stakeholders (about 338) directly committed in active working in social contest. The partners worked together in order to exchange best practices, present projects, practices, work methodologies and activities and in order to build up long lasting cooperation in the project field.

Four events have been organised (conference, training, workshops):

1. "Combating extreme poverty: policies and instruments at local level", a six days of presentations, debate and in site visits that faced the problem of extreme poverty specially in relation to mental and physical handicap, old age, gender dimension, childhood and family contest.
2. "Recognition of rights: recognizing the fundamental right of people in a situation of poverty and social exclusion".
3. "Integrated Homeless Strategy"
4. "Local strategies to fight unemployment" to allow the exchange of best practices on local measures and strategies to fight job loss, youth unemployment, long period unemployment specially in the light of the present economical crisis.

A long lasting cooperation agreement have been signed by the partners involved in occasion of the celebration of the Europe Day on May 9 2011.



How to set up a Town Twinning partnership

The initial decision

The initial impulse to become involved in a Town Twinning Partnership normally comes from the political or administrative staff of the Municipality who are interested to connect their local community at international level.

However, it is strategic for success that this initial enthusiasm spreads to the entire local community, and in particular to the main local actors, such as civil society actors and no-profit organisations active in the project topic field selected for the international cooperation activity.

At this very first stage, it would therefore be useful to have meetings within your local community actors in order to clarify the purpose of the Town Twinning project you want to undertake, and to discuss all its possible perspectives.

Remember a Town Twinning project is an activity that involves not only the municipal staff (political and administrative) but all the local community and citizens in all the project stages from the preparation to the final evaluation.

Suggestions: the initial decision

More specifically, you could pose questions such as:

- Which subject areas, themes, topics could be covered?
- What planning and organisation needs to take place?
- Which target groups are interested in participating?
- What support can be sought from the local community and civil society actors?
- What resources/skills are available at local level and what additional resources/skills can be acquired for example by skilled organisations as universities or research centres?
- What countries might be involved?



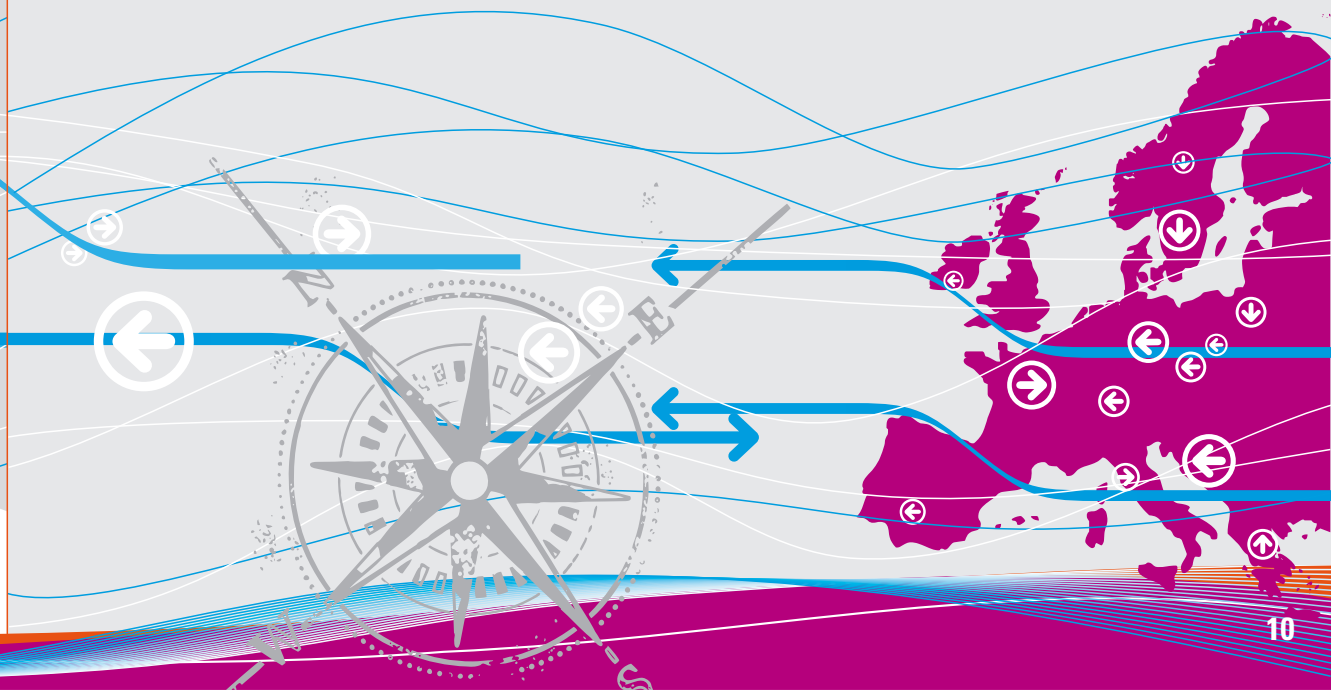
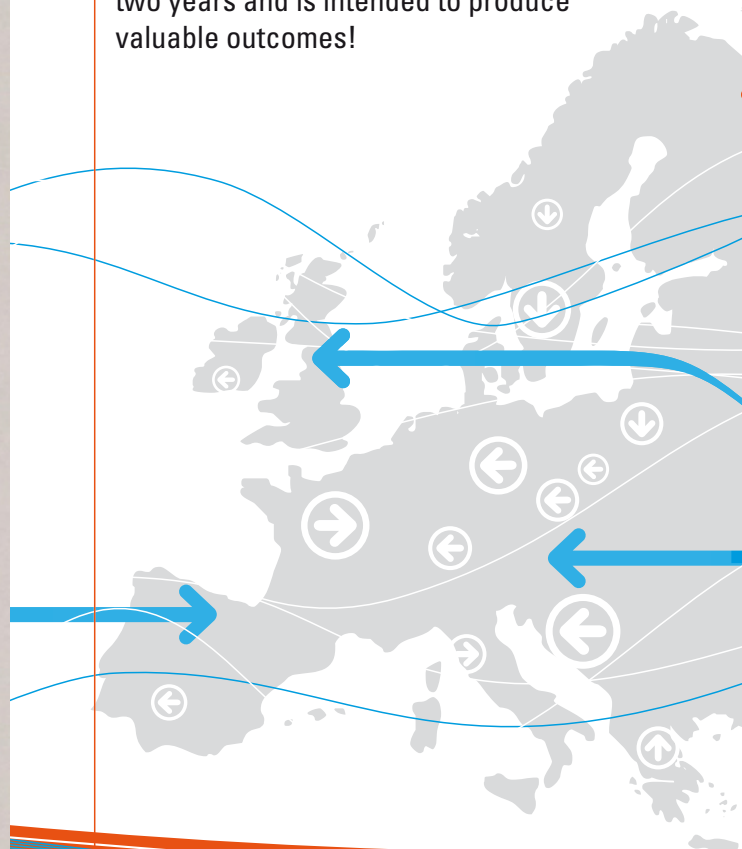
How to find partners

Finding partners might seem somewhat daunting at first. However, there are several ways to go about it, ranging from personal contacts to events and initiatives which have been expressly developed for the single purpose of helping you to find partners.

You should invest some time in the search for the right partner town. It is important to know your partners well before entering into a cooperation project which will last two years and is intended to produce valuable outcomes!

Suggestions: how to find international partners towns

- Personal contacts, both private and professional, are a good starting point. You yourself, your colleagues, may know members of local authorities abroad who would be interested in setting up a twinning partnership with your municipality.
- The regional authorities may also be able to help you. They may have "twinning" arrangements or other close contacts with their counterparts in other European countries, and could put you in touch with interested Municipalities in their area.
- The Europe for Citizens Points that have been set up in the EU countries in order to facilitate participation in the Programme.
- Provide free information and guidance on how to access European Citizenship funding opportunities, regular updates on all Citizenship related issues at European level, networking support facilitating contact between citizenship operators in different countries and partner finding opportunities. You can contact them through the web page: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/tools/ecp_en.php
- The database of other EU cooperation programmes as those related to the European Territorial Cooperation (Interreg), Culture, Youth can be useful to provide you information about local actors interested and skilled on several cooperation topics.



Preparing the application for funding

The procedure

The Europe for Citizens programme is managed by the EU Commission's EACEA Agency: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/index_en.php

On the EACEA web site you are able to find the application deadlines which are several during the year.

On the web site are published detailed instructions for the project application procedure and the downloadable application form. The application form is a joint document for the whole project, including information on each participating town.

You and your partners can easily fill in the application form together by distance. The application must be submitted to the EACEA agency by the applicant.

What makes a good application?

The programme defines a set of criteria which guide the selection process.

In general a good application should follow the subsequent criteria:

- Be sure that your project is relevant to the objectives and priorities (permanent and annual) of the Europe for Citizens Programme.

- Be sure that the partnership covers a relevant number of countries and you have included one or more of the new EU countries (who joined the EU starting from 2004).
- Be sure that all the promoters (applicant and partners) are actively involved in all the project activities and the project topics are relevant for all of them; relevant and appropriate target groups of participants are involved in each project country.
- Be sure that the programme of the activities is defined, appropriate, organised and clear.
- Be sure that the project involves different kinds of organisations as local authorities, no-profit organisation, civil society organisations, schools, universities, etc. according to the selected project topic and the envisaged activity programme.
- Remember that your project should have a short and long term effect at local, national and European levels, and in particular concrete link to the policy making process; it should also have impact on the participants (i.e. how their sense of belonging to the EU and their involvement in the EU integration issues could be increased).
- Be sure that you have planned an appropriate communication and dissemination plan for your project in order to guarantee its visibility at local and international level.

What happens if your application is successful?

If your project is selected, the EACEA will send you a grant agreement in which you commit to carry out the activities described in your application and to respect the contractual and reporting requirements. The agreement establish also the financial contribution assigned to your project. The grant is normally divided in two payments:

1. You will first get an advance of 50%: it is normally paid within two months from the Agency's signature of the grant agreement.
2. You will receive the remaining 50% after the end of the project, on receipt of a satisfactory final report.



Grant support, grant rules and reporting

The grant consists of a lump sum, the amount of which is specified according to several criteria related to the number of events planned in the project, the number of people and partners involved, the duration of the project and the number of communication tools planned.

This offers you a lot of flexibility in the way you spend the grant to organize the project activities. At the end of the project, in order to report the activities actually realized and receive the final payment you must demonstrate the factual fulfilment of the envisaged activities and the participation of the envisaged people.

A complete narrative report will be requested accompanied by the demonstration of the presence and effective participation of the citizens and the copies of the communication tools envisaged.

Suggestions: organising the partnership

When starting a Town Twinning project, you may find it useful to reflect on the following advice:

- Make sure you let everyone in the local community know about the success of your application. Visibility and active support of the entire local community is vital for the success of the project.
- Exchange greetings with your partners and take practical steps to get the partnership under way, such as the simultaneous issue of press releases and establishment of immediate contact between the project coordinators.
- Establish regular and effective communication between the coordinators in the partner municipalities. It is important to establish the cooperation on a regular flow of information, questions, suggestions and joint decisions. In order to do so, agree on the most useful and cheap means of communication to be used (e-mail, telephone, video conferencing, computer chats...).
- Organise an early briefing meeting for key people in your organisation to renew and secure their enthusiasm and commitment and in order to start the executive part of the project.

- Make sure that theory and practice meet and that you can quickly share practical outcomes of the partnership with colleagues in your own organisation and in your partner towns.
- Record events, outcomes, data, successes and concerns as they happen. You will need to evaluate the project and to report on its progress, so getting this information down when it is fresh will be far easier than trying to remember it later at the evaluation and reporting stage.
- Keep all important documents, tickets, certificates, invoices which prove that events, travels and activities have taken place. For your internal use, you will need to keep track of your expenses and monitor your budget. Please check with your hierarchy if you have to respect certain national rules when spending the grant.
- Be aware of the impact that staff changes can have on the partnership. Changes in staff have been the major cause of failure to date, so it is important to ensure that your partnership can withstand and survive changes of the staff, as well of political subjects.
- Keep your targets and time-scale under constant review.



The partnership gets under way

Town twinning citizens' meetings (measure 1.1.) as well as networks of twinned towns (1.2.) are partnership and cooperation projects. Besides working collaboratively on the agreed themes, project management and communication with your partners are important and also time-consuming tasks within a European cooperation project.

This chapter should provide you with some useful hints on how to manage your town twinning citizens' meetings and also the networks of twinned towns. You might find it helpful to apply other project management techniques too.

The more you plan your activities and discuss the best ways to organise the partnership and its internal communication, the easier will be the implementation of the partnership project, and the more time you will save later on.

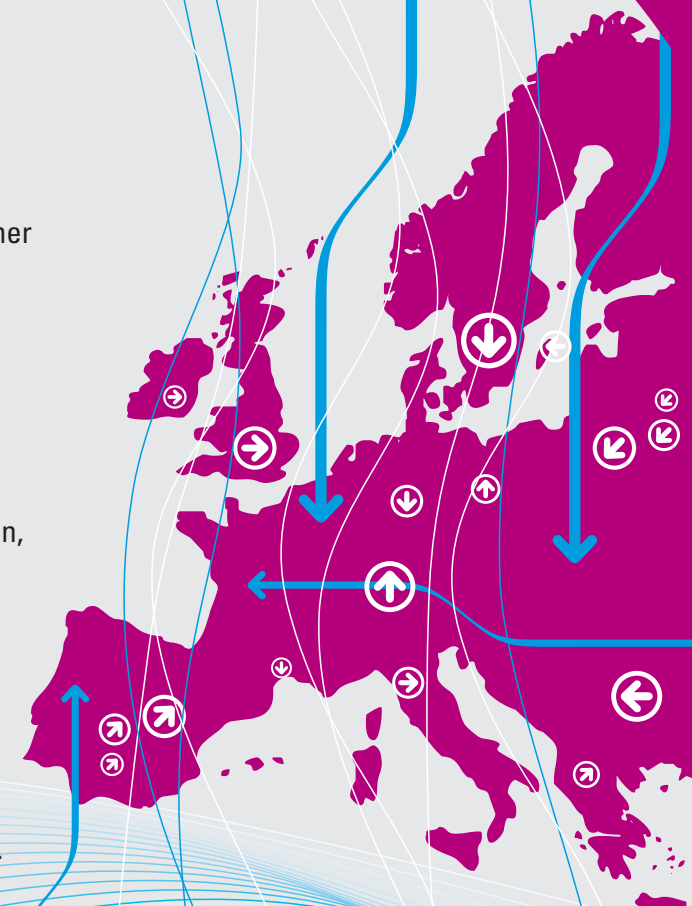
Suggestions: how to set up a work plan

Make sure that:

- Effective channels of communication are established.
- The timetable is realistic in relation to the desired outcomes.
- There is an agreement regarding which partner does what and when.
- You have considered how you will monitor and evaluate the project.

You will need to set dates for:

- Meetings: local meetings (local administration, local actors from civil society, business representatives) and transnational meetings with the partner town(s) and their respective actors.
- Mobility activities.
- Reporting and evaluation.
- Delivery and exchange of products, files, etc.



Organising a partnership

Once you have received the grant agreement, be clear with your partners that the foundations for cooperation have been set.

Experience has shown that frequent communication – both between and within the partners town and town network – is one of the key factors for the success of a European Citizenship Partnership.

Clarity, commitment and the will to compromise are other essential ingredients in the recipe for success.

This applies for both measures.

How to set up a work plan

The first thing to keep in mind in setting up a work plan is that the goal of the partnership should be attainable.

Do not be over-ambitious!

The main concern will be to agree on ways to organise the activities and on how to put ideas and plans into practice.

Remember that the themes of your Europe for Citizens Partnership project should be combined with other local activities and that actors from civil society organisations should actively participate in the activities. Clarity and coherence are keywords in a good work plan.

Provided that you have a common understanding of the objectives and the content of the partnership, you can set up a work plan that will ensure a steady and consistent development of the partnership.

Make sure that you and your partners fully understand and agree on the work plan! The best way to achieve this is to have a jointly agreed work plan in writing.

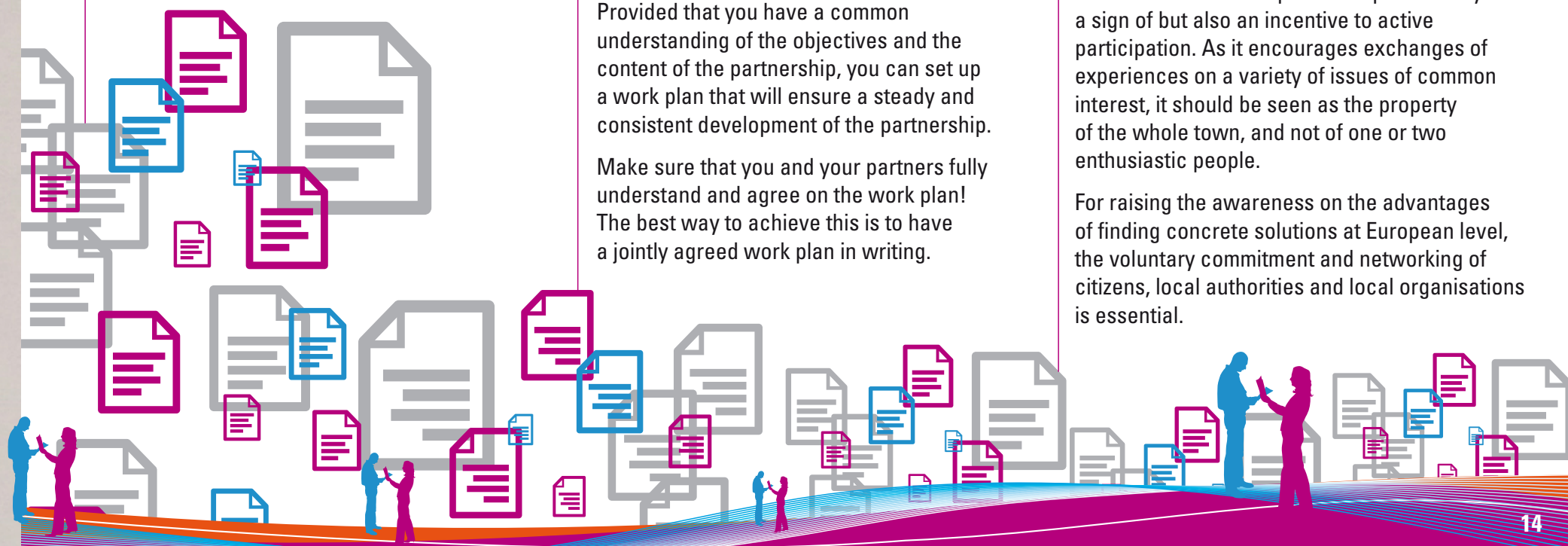
Team Building in your local community

Europe for Citizens Partnerships provide citizens, in collaboration with their local authorities and local associations from different areas/regions with the opportunity to participate in the development of a cross-curricular and transnational approach to the general twinning topic or special theme chosen for the partnership.

In each town, a Europe for Citizens Partnership should therefore involve a multidisciplinary team of local actors rather than being reserved to one organisation, or actors from one subject.

It is essential that the partnership is not only a sign of but also an incentive to active participation. As it encourages exchanges of experiences on a variety of issues of common interest, it should be seen as the property of the whole town, and not of one or two enthusiastic people.

For raising the awareness on the advantages of finding concrete solutions at European level, the voluntary commitment and networking of citizens, local authorities and local organisations is essential.



A broad approach in activating actors for the town twinning citizens meeting and the meetings of the networks of twinned towns will make it easier to:

- Put ideas into practice.
- Motivate citizens and associations.
- Attract the attention and active support of the whole local community.
- Motivate non-active people to get knowledge and give administrative and technical support.
- Make the project known.
- Attract the attention of other decision-makers.
- Attract the attention and support of other levels of administration and networks.

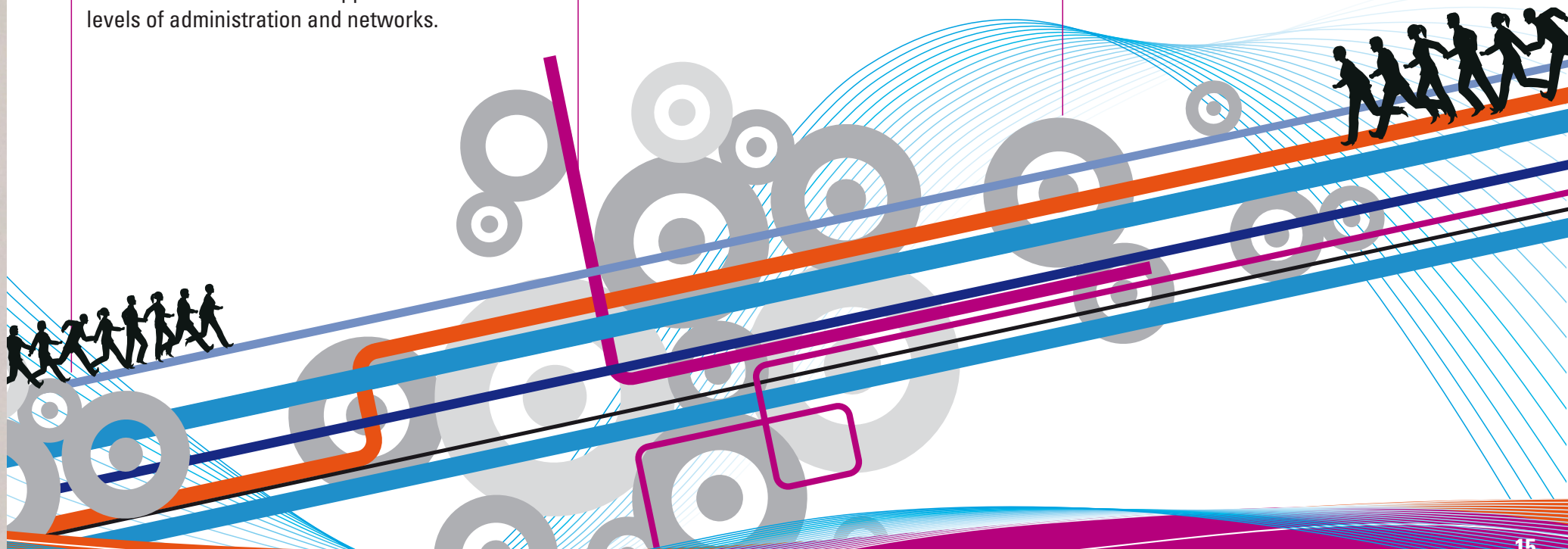
A genuine whole town partnership makes it easier to integrate the partnership activities into the day-to-day live and local network, and makes it more resistant to potential problems, such as changes in political and administrative leadership of the areas involved.

In partnerships which are focused on topics related to citizens' interests, all citizens should have the opportunity to participate in one way or another in project activities.

Ideally, citizens should participate actively in all phases of the partnership, including the planning, organization and evaluation of the activities.

And in partnerships which not only focus on citizens meetings a broad access for all interested citizens should be possible to the diverse themes handled in the project whenever the topic allows it.

It will be easier to give a sharp thematic profile to the partnership, and to increase its visibility, if there is a team behind it, and a common understanding about the aims, benefits and added value for the whole town or network of towns.



Involvement of relevant local actors

Transnational cooperation projects like the European Citizens Partnership projects give the promoters and organisations an opportunity to establish new links with partners in the local community, developing cooperation in new fields of community life. To achieve this, the promoters can play an active role, take the initiative and convince possible partners about the benefits of cooperation.

It would be useful to include not only the representatives of the local administration but to involve effectively associations and organisations from different fields – like education, economy, culture and other professional areas - that might be interested in becoming involved in the project or supporting it.

Local media in your area may have an interest in the results of the network and partnership. The results will also enable the local community in general and decision-makers in particular, to appreciate that the partnership offers tangible benefits and helps to connect the locality with the European level.

Both measures (1.1. and 1.2.) offer various opportunities not only to involve different actors of the local community into the project but also the possibility to discuss and develop new ideas and projects of transnational cooperation within Europe and between different European regions.

Suggestions: involvement of local community and other potential players

It is useful to find out about possibilities for cooperation with the following:

- Local and regional bodies and organisations.
- Associations working in the thematic field of the meeting/Network – like organisations from the fields of education, economy, culture and so forth.
- Business and civil societies' associations, and sports as well as leisure associations.
- Social partners.

- As there are often experiences coming from the education sector in transnational exchange their participation is often useful – like teacher training institutions, higher education institutions and universities, research centres with expertise in the field of meeting and networking.
- Professional bodies, trade organisations and chambers of commerce and industry are also potential partners as well as they include people which are interested in participating in the program.



Communication with your partners

Language

Even if promoting language learning is not one of the objectives of Europe for Citizens program – experiences show that citizens participating in town and network meetings and partnerships are happy to practice their foreign language skills. However, if the level in a foreign language is more modest, effective communication within the partnership may seem difficult. Therefore it is not uncommon that at the start participants in a partnership may be relieved when the most common language is chosen as the working one. However, later on their relief may turn into frustration at not being able to try out and improve their skills in other languages. Therefore, it is good to keep in mind that the common projects provide you and your citizens with an opportunity to use and improve your existing language skills, and, more important, learn new languages you might never have considered learning otherwise.

Communication methods

The telephone is a very direct and personal way of communicating, but it does have a number of disadvantages. Access to a telephone may often be a problem, and differences in time zones, individual timetables and patterns of the work day of participants can make calling difficult. Another drawback is that later on there is no tangible trace of what was agreed upon during telephone conversations. You should also remember that telephone conversations take place in real time – there is no time to look up words in a dictionary or to spend time making sense of a difficult passage. On the positive side, frequent connections and conversations will very quickly improve language skills!

Communicating in writing might be easier, at least initially. E-mail provide a good opportunity for being immediate and as personal as you wish. They have the added advantage of providing a tangible, lasting copy, and this in turn allows participants the leisure to work out what is being said and how to reply. Most associations, schools or business as well as each administration have an internet connection or will be able to find

some way of gaining access to one that can be used to send and receive messages. You might also think about using internet-based communication platforms, video conferences or even chats for communication and cooperation. For example the free Skype platform or the several free tools offered by Google, could be used as an additional tool to support cooperation.

When you are addressing the issue of communication in connection with new technologies, you need to be aware of the varying degrees of familiarity with these media within participating towns and areas. It is important that the related issue of accessibility and training needs are addressed in this context.

As far as younger people and youth organisations are involved in the preparation of the meetings and network activities the use of social networks might be applicable.

There are also projects from other European program areas like the newsroom 4 youth project (<http://news4youth.eu/>) which show new ways of communication within projects and networks as well as new modes of dissemination of results of the work done to a wider audience.

Suggestions: information and communication technology in a project

ICT has proved particularly suitable for project work because:

- It gives an opportunity to cooperate with partners in distant countries and it makes it simpler, faster, cheaper and more fun.
- It motivates citizens and encourages them to interact with citizens in other regions and towns in partner schools and to exchange ideas and share knowledge with them.
- It encourages to work independently.
- It increases linguistic and cultural awareness and provides the possibility to use foreign languages in an authentic setting.
- It makes the acquisition of knowledge more authentic.
- It gives access to a wide range of up-to-date sources of information which can be efficiently collected and compared.
- It provides new learning opportunities, particularly in the field of distance learning.
- It makes it easier for disabled persons to become involved.
- It enables the locality to become more visible – the local website will give interested parties information on what is happening within the project and the network.

Information and communication technology in a project

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) plays an increasingly important role in transnational projects.

The role of ICT in a European Citizen Partnership is extremely useful for efficient and rapid communication.

When using ICT in your Partnership, try to build on what you know. Start with those techniques which are familiar to you and exchange experiences among the partners. Ensure also that you have technical support in case the technology breaks down. There is for example eTwinning which offers a safe Internet platform with all the standard tools for communicating and sharing among schools and offers many opportunities to progress in the efficient use of ICT for pedagogical collaboration.

In different areas you also find free platforms, tools and sites to organize your project and ongoing communication like the free platforms of Facebook, Google and Skype.

Suggestions: useful ITC tools

The eTwinning portal also offers a wealth of advice to actors who want to use ICT tools in the projects.

Please consult www.eTwinning.net

An useful tool is offered by the "Get Connected Guide" (founded under the Lifelong Learning Programme), guide to social media and online collaborations that offers guidance on how to maintain relationships, work together and build up networks through social media and online technologies: <http://lpukecorys.hoop.la>

Monitoring progress

Monitoring and evaluation are crucial for the success of a project.

It is important to continuously monitor the partnership in order to keep it on track and improve your performance.

It allows you to adapt the partnership's objectives and activities to new or changing needs and to ensure that the partnership gives maximum added value to the actors and organizations directly involved and to other potential beneficiaries.

An interesting evaluation tool developed in the context of URB AL European Union program is the "PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR EVALUATING PARTICIPATORY PROCESSES" which helps you to define the goals, indicators and method to evaluate your project.

[http://www.oidp.net/pdf/](http://www.oidp.net/pdf/GuiaPracticaEvaluacion_en.pdf)

[GuiaPracticaEvaluacion_en.pdf](http://www.oidp.net/pdf/GuiaPracticaEvaluacion_en.pdf)

Suggestions: monitoring progress and self-evaluation

You and your partners should reflect on the following questions during and after the project:

- Have the plans been followed, and if not, why not?
- Are the goals appropriate?
- Should the partnership project be modified?
- What are the benefits of a given activity for the participants?
- How did the participants complete the tasks set for and by them?
- What skills are being/have been developed?
- Is the project helping to raise achievement levels and interest for further transnational co-operation projects?
- Are the means of communication used appropriate and efficient?
- Are the local actors/organizations working together?
- Does the project have an impact on the network in each locality?
- Are representatives not only of local community but from civil society and economic sector or other relevant field interested and been involved?
- Has there been an increase in citizens skills in foreign languages, and their motivation to learn them?
- Is there a greater awareness of the European dimension of local development, economy and culture?
- Was the planned end-product created? Have the end results been achieved?

Results and their dissemination

Dissemination means the sharing of your experiences and the results of your project. Different target groups may have an interest in the end product of your European Citizens project. These include not only local but also regional authorities and businesses (especially if they have supported your Partnership), civil society institutions, organisations and actors from various fields of interest.

From the outset, you and your partners should outline plans for how, when and where to reach the target groups of your Partnership. Be imaginative, because there are many possibilities.

The following suggestions might be useful:

- Organise small exhibitions in your locality in different public places.
- Develop a local newsletter, or provide articles for one that already exists.
- Report on the partnership in school and council reports.
- Publish articles in the participating associations yearbooks.
- Use websites.
- Distribute information at open days, and at local, regional and national conferences.
- Write articles for academic and professional journals.

- Inform local, regional and national media.
- Use other meetings, seminars and networks to provide information about your activities.

Specialities in town twinning citizens' meetings

This measure is aimed at activities that involve or promote direct exchanges between European citizens through their participation in town-twinning activities.

A project must involve municipalities from at least two participating countries, of which at least one is an EU Member State.

The project must have a minimum of 25 international participants coming from the invited municipalities.

The maximum duration of the meeting is 21 days.

The maximum grant to be awarded is EUR 25 000 per project.

The minimum grant awarded is EUR 5 000.

Suggestions: how can I create a successful project?

First of all, make sure your application is clear and well structured.

Provide clear and complete documentation including a detailed and informative programme of the meeting you are preparing.

Here are some hints on how you can make your project application as successful as possible:

- Make sure you read the full programme guide before writing your application.
- Pay due attention to the Europe for Citizens programme's priority themes and annual priorities and to the elements included in the town twinning concept.
- Prepare a clear and detailed presentation of the programme planned for the meeting.
- Explain what will happen, the role of the participants and the lessons to be learnt.
- Make sure that the meeting's programme foresees an active role for the participants.
- Explain how the local community is involved in the meeting (during the preparation, the actual meeting, and any possible follow-up).
- Explain what kind of publicity and other visibility the meeting will get.



Specialities in networks of twinned towns

This measure supports the development of networks created on the basis of town twinning links, which are important for ensuring structured, intense and multifaceted cooperation among municipalities, and therefore for contributing to maximizing the impact of the Programme.

A project must foresee at least three events. It must involve municipalities from at least four participating countries, of which at least one is an EU Member State.

The project must have a minimum of 30 international participants coming from the invited municipalities.

The maximum project duration is 24 months.

The maximum duration of each event is 21 days.

How can I create a successful project?

First of all, make sure your application is clear and well structured.

Provide clear and complete documentation including a detailed and informative programme of the meeting you are preparing.

Here are some hints on how you can make your project application as successful as possible:

- Prepare a clear and detailed presentation of the conference/workshop programme(s).
- Explain the impact of the events on future co-operation between the towns involved.
- Use various communication methods to implement the project programme (lectures, debates, discussions, workshops).
- Focus on the informative and educational value of the project programme.
- Discuss European policies and their implementation at the local level, plus the construction and future of the European Union.
- Prepare an action that encourages debate and exchange of experience between the participating towns.
- Invite local experts (as speakers or participants) specialized in thematic fields chosen according to the theme of your event.



Sustainability

Entering into a European Citizens Partnership project also means being open to new ideas, encountering new experiences and meeting new friends and colleagues in Europe. You might not want to lose that, after the funding for your Partnership has ended.

You may wish to maintain your work and your cooperation with the same as well as with additional other partners in Europe.

How can you achieve sustainability for your Partnership and how can you pursue international activities in your area – probably without the help of new funding?

There are basically two ways of looking at sustainability:

- Consolidation and development: how to pursue and further develop the good work in your town and in your local community.
- Continuity: how to continue the collaboration with your partner areas on a European level.

Already during the funding period, you should start planning for the future of the partnership. You will have to clarify what will be possible in future, in the light of resources and the interests of your partners.

Actions you might consider include activities that could provide additional funding, and ways of minimizing costs.

You should think of ways to integrate best practices developed during the first Partnership into the daily work of your institutions, and to pass them on to new colleagues and organizations in your localities.

You should also try to find feasible ways of staying in touch with your partners (virtual meetings, eTwinning, joint ventures, exchange programmes, etc).

Quality and sustainability (QAS)

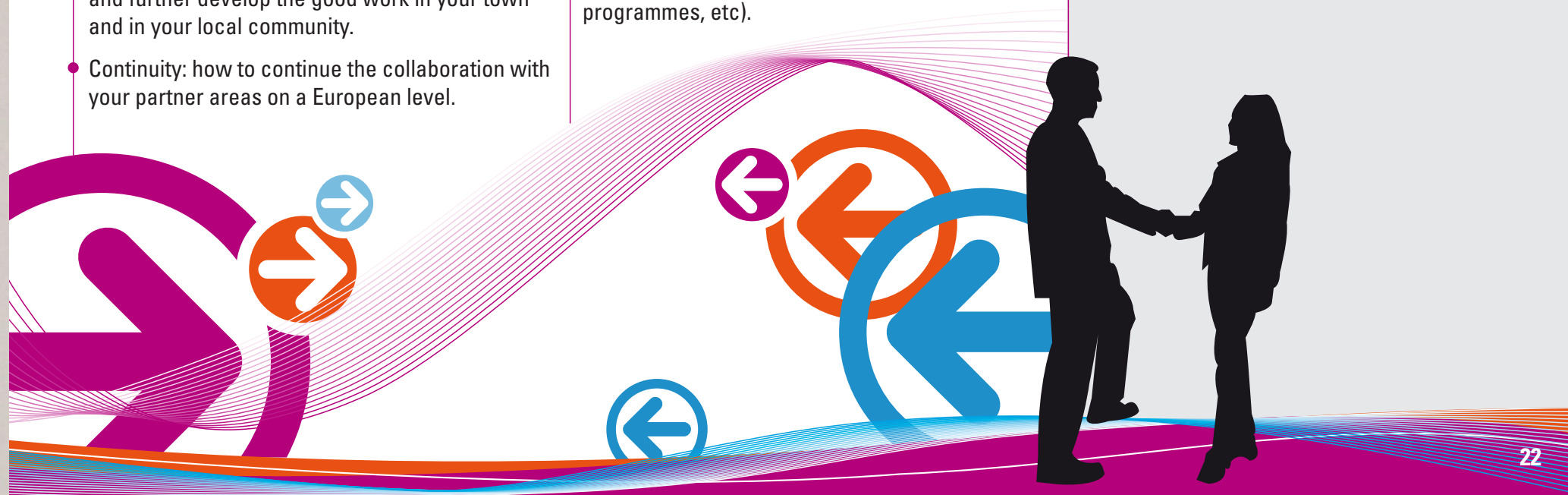
QAS is a joint project of National Agencies in Sweden, the Czech Republic, France, and the UK.

The project developed tools for the monitoring of partnership projects and for ensuring their quality and sustainability.

Their web site provides a set of possible actions that partnerships can take to prepare for sustainability, listed in a document called "Facing Sustainability".

For partnerships which are about to end, the "Sustainability Kit" on the same web site also contains a wide selection of ideas on how to pursue activities.

More see: <http://qas.programkontoret.se>



Conclusion

This handbook is intended to present the information you need to help you decide if you want to embark upon a European Citizenship project under action 1 of the programme. It attempts to provide a realistic evaluation of the time and work entailed, of the potential difficulties, and of the benefits and rewards enjoyed by all those involved in a European Citizenship Partnership.

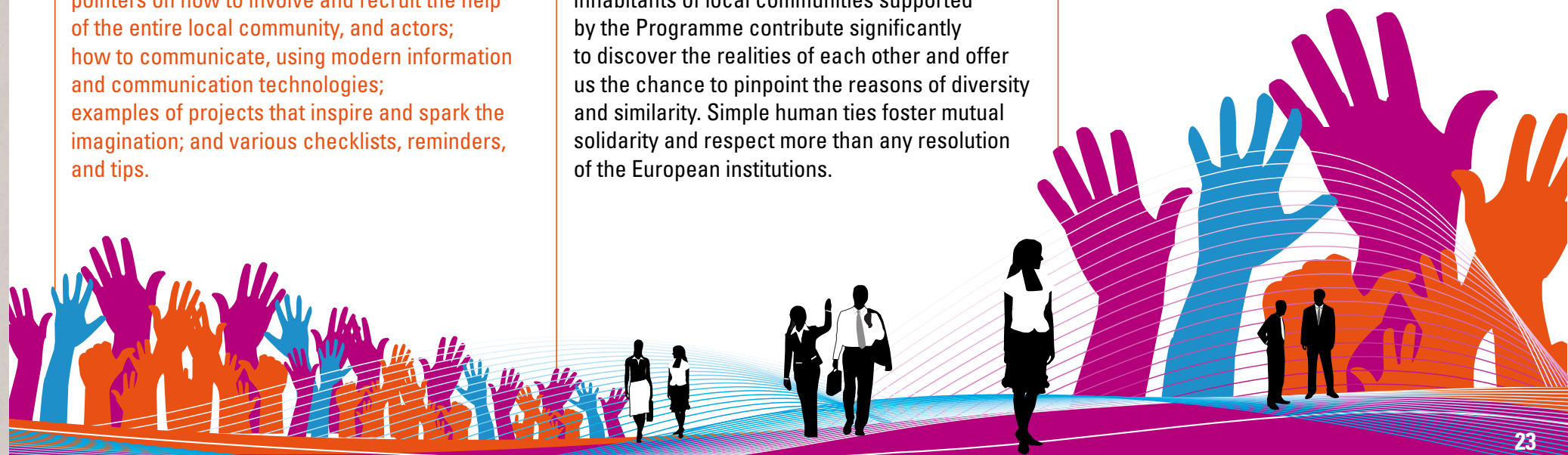
The handbook offers advice on the stages of launching and carrying out a European Citizenship project: on how to initiate, organise and structure a partnership; technical advice on applications and grants; details on arranging safe and successful transnational activities; pointers on how to involve and recruit the help of the entire local community, and actors; how to communicate, using modern information and communication technologies; examples of projects that inspire and spark the imagination; and various checklists, reminders, and tips.

The fact that the Programme dealing with active European citizenship largely addresses the local communities is not a coincidence since these communities form an environment, in which borders between national citizenships of EU member states are – formally speaking – being erased most efficiently. However, it is not the formal dimension of European citizenship that matters but the dimension defining the substance of the community called the European Union.

One of the essential assumptions of the European Union as community is the enforcement of the solidarity principle. Especially meetings of “quite ordinary” inhabitants of local communities supported by the Programme contribute significantly to discover the realities of each other and offer us the chance to pinpoint the reasons of diversity and similarity. Simple human ties foster mutual solidarity and respect more than any resolution of the European institutions.

The processes which the Europe for Citizens programme wishes to stimulate are complementary to the formation of intergovernmental community. These processes increase our awareness that we are actually dealing with the same or similar challenges and are looking for solutions to them jointly. The Programme fosters activities, in which people from places that were only a point on the map become men and women with which we can share life in the same community.

We hope this handbook will support you to work locally in this direction.



Please find below some links to documents and websites which provide additional information on town twinning, partnerships and the Citizenship programme.

European Commission Citizenship:
<http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship>

The citizenship programme 2014-2020:
http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/about-the-europe-for-citizens-programme/future-programme-2014-2020/index_en.htm

European and international twinning and partnerships development:
<http://www.twinning.org>

Citizenship Programme 2007-2013 practical guidelines for projects and application forms:
<http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship>

Results of the mid-term evaluation of the Europe for Citizens programme:
http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/news/news1225_en.htm

Europe for Citizens Points in the Member States:
http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/tools/ecp_en.php

Twinning for tomorrow's world – Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR):
http://admin5.geniebuilder.com/users/ccre/bases/T_599_46_3524.pdf

EVE platform for dissemination and exploitation of projects results in the fields of Education, Training, Culture and Youth:
http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/eve/index_en.htm

The website on «European Citizenship», a joint initiative of the Partnership on Youth, Salto, Connect Youth and Frankly Speaking:
<http://www.european-citizenship.org>

The European Union Democracy Observatory on Citizenship:
<http://eudo-citizenship.eu>

NECE - Networking European Citizenship Education:
http://www.bpb.de/veranstaltungen/PAJZMN,0,0,NECE_Networking_European_Citizenship_Education.html

