Mid-term evaluation of the Europe for Citizens Programme 2014-2020

Final Report

September 2017

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Glossary

AF	Analytical Framework
CDG	Civil Dialogue Group
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DG	Directorate-General
DG COMM	Directorate-General for Communication
DG EAC	Directorate-General for Education and Culture
DG HOME	Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs
EACEA	Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency
EC	European Commission
EfCP	Europe for Citizens Programme
EU	European Union
IL	Intervention Logic
MS	Member State
NCP	National Contact Point
NTT	Networks of towns
OG	Operating Grant
OGB	Operating Grant beneficiary
PC	Public Consultation
ToR	Terms of Reference
TT	Town-Twinning
WBS	Web-based survey

1.Introduction

Under Council Regulation (EU) No 390/2014 of 14 April 2014[1], the Commission is obliged to ensure that *"regular, external and independent evaluation of the Europe for Citizens Programme be carried out and shall report to the European Parliament on a regular basis"*[2]. Specifically, the Commission must also submit an interim evaluation report on the implementation of the Programme to the Council of the European Union, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions by 31 December 2017[3].

The Commission's Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs mandated Deloitte to conduct the mid-term evaluation of the Europe for Citizens Programme 2014-2020 (hereinafter EfCP or "the Programme").

The purpose of the assignment was to:

- Meet the evaluation requirements of the Council Regulation establishing the Europe for Citizens programme 2014-2020;
- Assess the Programme's results and outputs so far compared to its objectives and initial expectations against the following five evaluation criteria: **relevance, EU added-value, effectiveness and sustainability, efficiency, and coherence**; and
- Assess qualitative and quantitative aspects of the implementation of the Programme during the first years of implementation.

In addition to fulfilling the evaluation requirements of the Programme's legal basis, the results of the mid-term evaluation will inform the **proposals on the future of any successor** Europe for Citizens Programme by *"reflecting on the continuation or not of the programme in its current format and suggesting first orientations for a possible successor programme after 2020"*[4].

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[1] Council Regulation (EU) No 390/2014 of 14 April 2014 establishing the 'Europe for Citizens' programme for the period 2014-2020 (OJ L 115 of 17.04.2014).
[2] Article 15 (3) of n1.
[3] Article 15 (4) of n1.
[4] As per the Terms of Reference of the current evaluation study.

2. The Europe for Citizens Programme

2.1. Background of the initiative

The roots of the EfCP lie in the perception of a need to be more proactive in bridging the gap between the EU institutions and the citizens of the EU, in other words, to bring the EU closer to its citizens, but also in an attempt to activate citizens' participatory behaviour. This concept was first formalised in the 2004 **Community action programme to promote Active European Citizenship (civic participation)**[5]. The programme lasted for two years, until 2006, with a financial envelope of EUR 72 million, and awarded project grants[6] and Operating Grants[7] in the field of active citizenship. In total, the Community Action Programme 2004-2006 funded over 30 organisations, as well as more than 250 projects by NGOs, associations and federations, and trade unions. Also, over 2,800 Town-Twinning projects received funding from the programme.

Based on the first and successful experiences, the **Europe for Citizens Programme** (hereinafter: EfCP) was established for the period 2007-2013 with the aim to *"giving citizens the opportunity to interact and participate in constructing an ever closer Europe, developing a sense of European identity, fostering a sense of ownership of the EU among its citizens, and enhancing tolerance and mutual understanding between European citizens respecting and promoting cultural and linguistic diversity, while contributing to intercultural dialogue"*[8]. The underlying idea of the EfCP was that, in order to foster citizen support for European integration, greater emphasis should be placed on *"common values, history and culture as key elements of a European society founded on the principles of freedom, democracy and respect for human rights, cultural diversity, tolerance and solidarity"*[9].

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[5] Council Decision 2004/100/EC of 26 January 2004 establishing a Community action programme to promote Active European Citizenship (civic participation).

[6] i.e. actions with a limited lifetime (based on calls for proposals).

[7] i.e. to cover costs of an organisation with usual or permanent activities of European interest (based on calls for proposals).

[8] Decision No 1904/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2006 establishing for the period 2007 to 2013 the programme 'Europe for Citizens' to promote active European citizenship.

[9] ibid.

The 2007-2013 Programme provided financial support through three mechanisms, i.e. project grants, Operating Grants, and service contracts (based on calls for tender), to different projects grouped under four action strands:

- Action 1: Active citizens for Europe;
- Action 2: Active civil society in Europe;
- Action 3: Together for Europe;
- Action 4: Active European remembrance.

Its total budget was **EUR 215 million** which went on 6 500 projects which reached 7 million people during 2011-2013[10]. The Commission report on the implementation, results and overall assessment of the 2007-2013 programme[11] confirmed the **added-value of the Programme** and **its unique "European offer"**.

After the success of the first programming period, and two external evaluations[12], calling for project monitoring improvements, more outcome-oriented planning, linking the past with the future of the EU, a "revamped version" [13] of the EfCP was adopted in April 2014. The **2014-2020 Programme** reflected the Commission's intention to **maximise the impact of the new Programme**, however it received a substantially reduced budget compared to the 2007-2013 programming period: **EUR 187 718 000**.

The **general objectives** of the 2014-2020 Programme are:

(a) to contribute to citizens' understanding of the Union, its history and diversity;
(b) to foster European citizenship and to improve conditions for civic and democratic participation at Union level.

This was a modification in the course of adoption relative to the proposal, which said: "Under the global aim of contributing to the understanding about the European Union and of promoting civic participation, the programme shall contribute to the following general objective: Strengthen remembrance and enhance capacity for civic participation at the Union level."

The **specific objectives** are:

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

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[10] Europe for Citizens, results 2007-2013, 22.10.2014
[11] Commission Report to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, on the mid-term evaluation of the "Europe for Citizens" Programme 2007-2013, COM(2011) 83 final, Brussels, 1.3.2011.
[12] A mid-term evaluation in 2011 and an ex-post evaluation in 2015.
[13] European Parliament, Directorate General for Internal Policies, Policy Department B: Structural and Cohesion Policies, Culture and Education, Europe for Citizens Programme: New Programme Implementation – First Experiences, July 2016.

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

These reflect amendments in the course of discussion of the proposal to introduce the concepts of peace and values and of intercultural understanding, as the original proposals were:

(a) to raise awareness on remembrance, the Union's history, identity and aim by stimulating debate, reflection and networking;

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

2.1. The Europe for Citizens Programme 2014-2020

Under this section we present the Structure of the Programme, its budget and spending, as well as its monitoring indicators.

2.1.1. Structure of the Programme

The EfCP 2014-2020 is structured as follows:

- **Strand 1: European remembrance**, with a focus on raising awareness of remembrance, the common history and values of the European Union;
- **Strand 2: Democratic engagement and civic participation**, with the aim of encouraging the democratic and civic participation of citizens at the European level. Three types of measures are funded under this strand:
  - **Town-Twinning**;
  - **Networks of towns;**
  - **Civic society projects**.

These strands are complemented by a **Horizontal Action** (also called "Valorisation") covering the analysis, dissemination and use of project results.

The 2014-2020 Programme has two funding mechanisms for projects under Strand 1 and Strand 2:

- **Action Grants,** which count for around 70% of the total budget of the Programme**:** can be granted for projects (within both strands), i.e. for actions with a limited lifetime during which proposed specific activities are implemented;
- **Operating Grants,** which count for around 30% of the total budget of the Programme**:** provide financial support for costs required for the proper conduct of the usual and permanent activities of an organisation. This includes staff costs, the cost of internal meetings, publications, information and dissemination, travel costs arising from the

implementation of the work programme, rental payments, depreciation and other costs directly linked to the organisation's work programme.

Action Grants and Operating Grants are awarded separately, subject to different calls for proposals. For Strand 1 and Civil Society Projects under Strand 2, there is only one selection round (in March) whereas for Town-Twinning and Networks of Towns under Strand 2, there are two rounds, in March and in September each year.

The figure below illustrates the Programme's Strands and types of projects supported by the EfCP, as well as the portion of the budget attributed to them.

Figure 1: Strands and types of projects of the EfCP 2014-2020
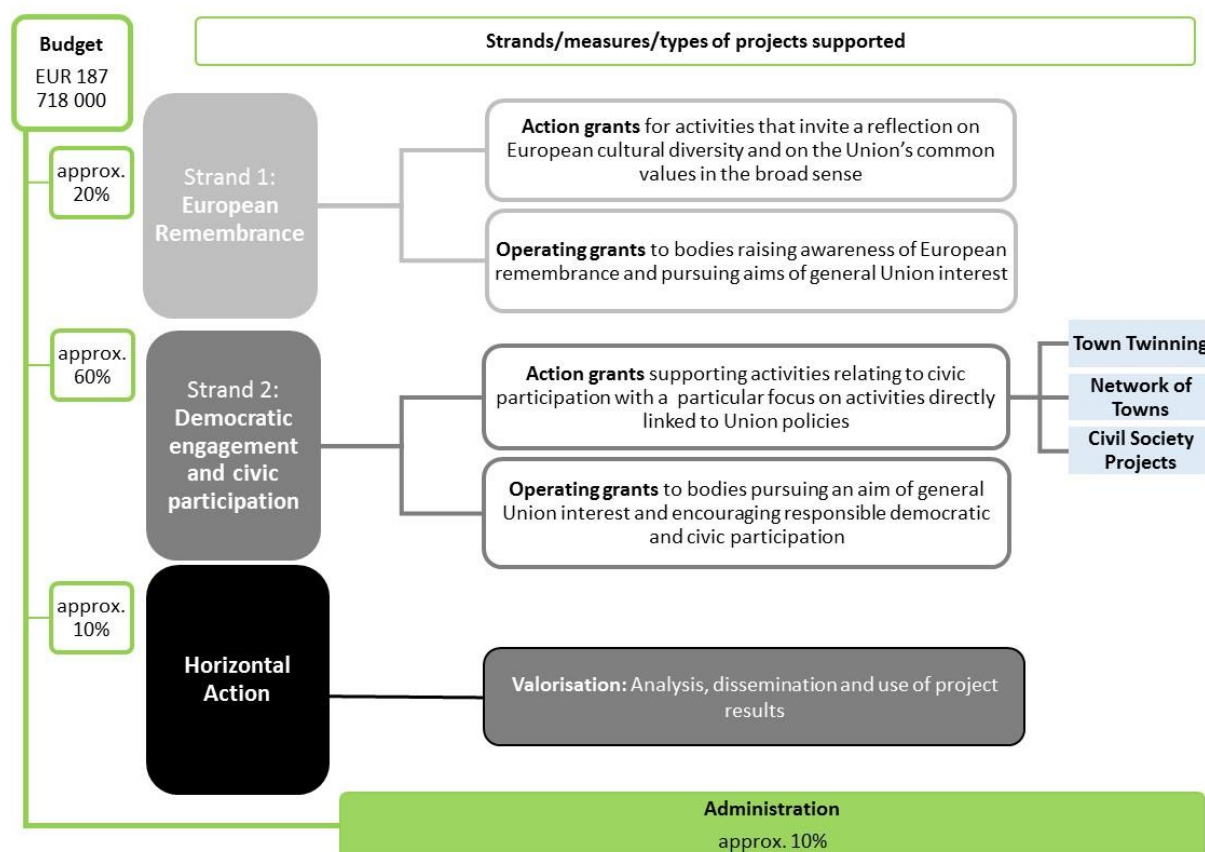
Source: Study Team, based on The EfCP Regulation[1]

Calls for proposals for **Action Grants** are published on a rolling basis throughout the year on the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) website.[14] In order to apply, applicants have to register on the Education, Audiovisual, Culture, Citizenship and Volunteering

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[14] The actions under the Programme are managed by the executive agency EACEA. The calls for proposals available on: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/europe-for-citizens/funding_en

Participant Portal and fill in the **application eForm**. Then, to be selected, applicants have to comply with a series of eligibility, selection and award criteria[15].

An innovation under the current programme were **framework partnerships** for a duration of four years, allowing **Operating Grant beneficiaries** to be sure of receiving financial support over a four-year period (2014-2017). Specific annual grants based on these partnership agreements are signed each year, based on yearly work programmes submitted to EACEA, and were awarded for the first time in 2015. Operating Grant applicants apply the same way as Action Grant applicants, i.e. they have to register on the Education, Audiovisual, Culture, Citizenship and Volunteering Participant Portal and fill in the application eForm.

The **European Commission** (DG HOME) is responsible for the Programme. It is assisted by EACEA in the Programme's implementation and execution.

In line with Article 9 of the EfCP Regulation[1], a **Programme Committee**, notably composed of representatives of the Member States – along with non-EU participating countries[16] – , supervises the implementation of the Programme[17]. It particularly gives an opinion to the Commission with regard to the annual work programmes and the priorities of the Programme, while it is informed of the annual activity reports. The Committee meets once a year[18].

At Member State level, the EfCP **National Contact Points** (NCPs) are national structures[19] receiving operating grants under the horizontal action of the Europe for Citizens programme. Their task is to provide information and ensure promotion of the EfCP to the general public, and potential Programme beneficiaries. The NCPs play an intermediary role between these stakeholders and the European Commission, by communicating the programme to stakeholders and assisting them in understanding application requirements as well as 'facilitating the partner search. The NCPs are also involved in enhancing dissemination activities to promote the Programme's results (i.e. promotion on national/regional level of the transnational cooperation)[20]. While participating countries are not required to host an NCP, their number has steadily grown, reaching **31 in 2016** (compared to 22 NCPs by end of the previous programming period).

Similar to the previous programming period, the Regulation establishing the EfCP emphasised that *"the Commission shall have a regular dialogue with the beneficiaries of the Programme and*

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[15] Programme guide available on https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/eacea-site/files/documents/comm2013003670000en.pdf

[16] "*The EU Member States take part in the implementation of the Europe for Citizens Programme through the Programme Committee, to which they appoint representatives. The Programme Committee is formally consulted on different aspects of the implementation of the Programme, including on the proposed annual work plan, the selection criteria and procedures, etc. Other countries participating in the Programme also take part in the Programme Committee, as observers without voting right.*"

[17] Rules of procedure for the "Europe for citizens" committee, EFCC/002/2014 – EN.

[18] In 2014, 2015 and 2016, the meeting took place in October.

[19] NCPs are staff working for either national authorities or other designated organisations.

[20] National Contact Points, Vademecum, November 2016

relevant partners and experts."[21] Formerly named Structured Dialogue Group, this stakeholder consultation forum was re-designated as the **Civil Dialogue Group** (CDG) **in the 2014 programming period**[22]. The members should be either recipients of Operating Grants under one of the two strands of the current Programme, or organisations which have received an Operating Grant during EfCP 2007-2013 and have expressed their continued interest in taking part to the dialogue, as well as organisations/think tanks which have expressed an interest in Programme and/or work in this policy area, but do not necessarily benefit from any support under the EfCP.[23] The CDG discusses all matters related to the EfCP, its annual priorities and its implementation. It also has a dissemination role of the Programme's results towards their member organisations in the country they operate.

The figure below presents the structure of the EfCP's management.

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[21] OJ L 115 of 17.04.2014

[22] See Framework for Civil Dialogue in Matters Covered By The "Europe For Citizens" Programme 2014-2020: http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/pdf/framework_for_civil_dialogue_efc_2014_2020final.pdf

[23] The list members of the Civil Dialogue Group is available online: http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/pdf/04122014_organisations.pdf

Figure 2: The 2014-2020 EfCP management structure

Provides opinion on different aspects of the implementation of the Programme, including on the proposed annual work plan, the selection criteria and procedures, as well as the priorities

Informed of Annual Activity Reports

Member States (members)

Non-EU Member States (observers)

Programme Committee

European Commission (DG HOME)

Guides and monitors the general Implementation of EFCP

Defines objectives, strategies and priority areas of action, including targets and criteria

Manages budget

Manages follow-up and evaluation of the Programme at European level

Discusses all matters relating to the EFCP and encourages exchanges of experiences and good practices, as well as contributes to the dissemination of the EFCP's results

Monitors and discusses policy developments in related fields

Civil Dialogue Group

EACEA

Implements the majority of activities under the EFCP

Provides financial management, monitors projects, communicates with beneficiaries and carries out on the spot controls

Draws up calls for proposals, selects projects and signs Grant Decisions/Agreements)

Manages the Europe for Citizens National Contact Points

Europe for Citizens National Contact Points

Provide guidance and support to stakeholders and applicants

Provide grass-roots dissemination of information on the Programme implementation, its activities and funding opportunities

policy & management

policy execution

Source: Study Team

2.1.2. Programme budget and spending

The total budget for the EfCP for the period 2014-2020 is **EUR 187 718 000**. The budget foreseen in the Regulation was initially EUR 185 468 000, but it was increased in 2014, due to two factors:

- the adoption of an additional amount of EUR 2 000 000 by the budgetary authority; and
- the transfer of an amount of EUR 250 000 EUR from the cancelled preparatory action "European Civil Society House" to the budget line "Europe for Citizens" Programme[24].

In the three years in scope of this study, the annual amount spent on the Programme's strands and the Horizontal action was as follows:

Table 1: Yearly budget for EfCP implementation, 2014-2016

Year	Annual amount spent (EUR)
2014	22 686 003[25]
2015	21 694 000
2016	22 632 231
Total 2014-2016	**67 012 324**

Source: Study Team, based on DG HOME annual reports on EfCP activities[26]

The total EUR 67 012 324 spent during the first three years of the Programme's 2014-2020 programming period accounts for 35.7% of the total budget available over the seven-year life of the Programme.

The figure below shows the difference between the budget committed and the amount actually spent over the three years in scope.

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

[25] The initial budget foreseen was EUR 22 580 000 but the final budget spent was EUR 22 686 003, due to some reallocations.

[26] European Commission, Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs, Report on the activities of the "Europe for Citizens" Programme in 2016 (Brussels, March 2017); European Commission, Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs, Report on the activities of the "Europe for Citizens" Programme in 2015 (Brussels, March 2016); European Commission, Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs, Report on the activities of the "Europe for Citizens" Programme in 2014 (Brussels, May 2015).

Figure 3: Total annual budget (committed and awarded) 2014-2016, (in million EUR)
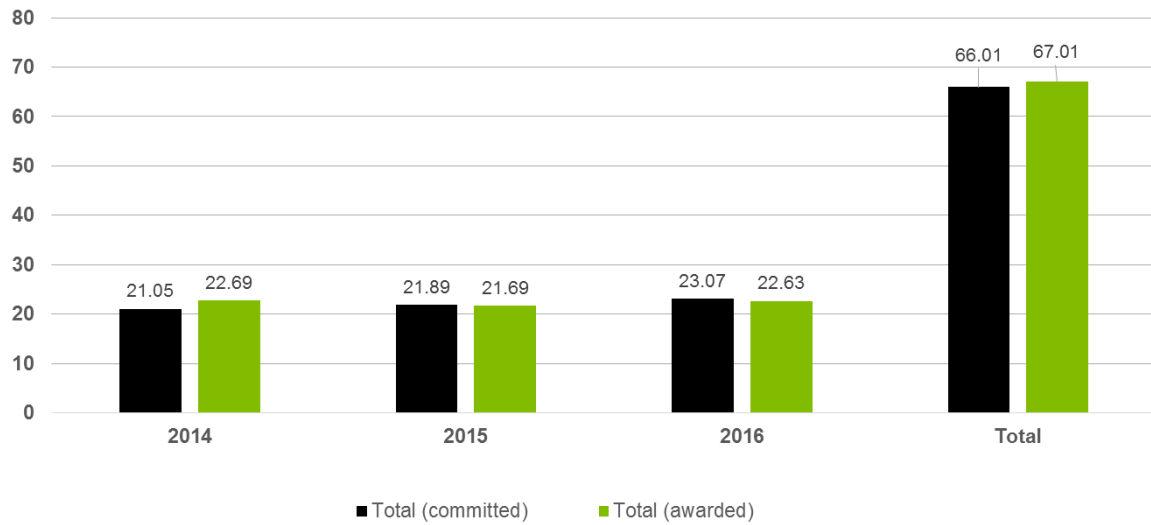
Source: Study Team, based on DG HOME annual reports on EfCP activities[26]

The following two figures overall present the **total number of the grants awarded** (under both strands) and the respective budget for the three years in scope.

Figure 4: Number of grants awarded, 2014-2016
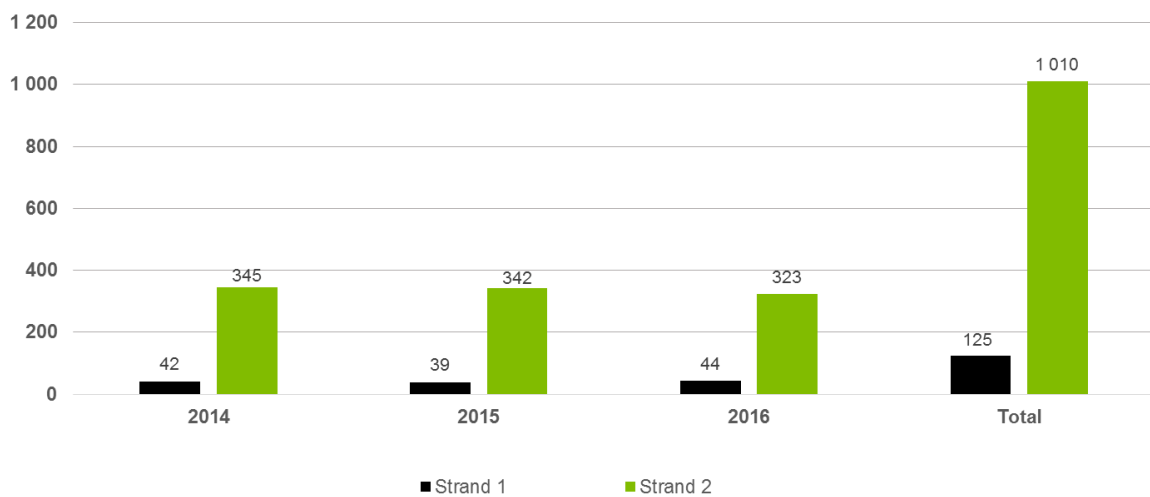
Source: Study Team, based on DG HOME annual reports on EfCP activities[26]

Figure 5: Budget of grants awarded, 2014-2016 (in million EUR)
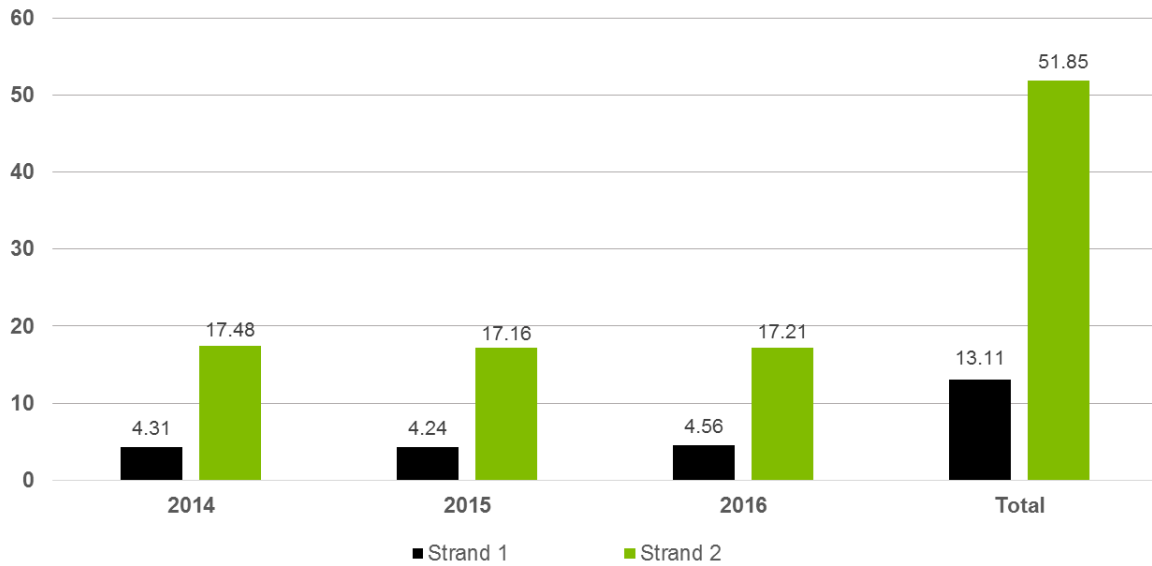
Source: Study Team, based on DG HOME annual reports on EfCP activities[26]

Strand 1 accounted for 20-21% of the total annual budget, Strand 2 accounted for 74-75% whereas Horizontal Action consumed 5% of available budget on an annual basis.

The next figure shows the **allocation of the annual awarded budget** to the two different types of grants, i.e. Action and Operating Grants.

Figure 6: Grants awarded per type of grant, 2014-2016 (in million EUR)
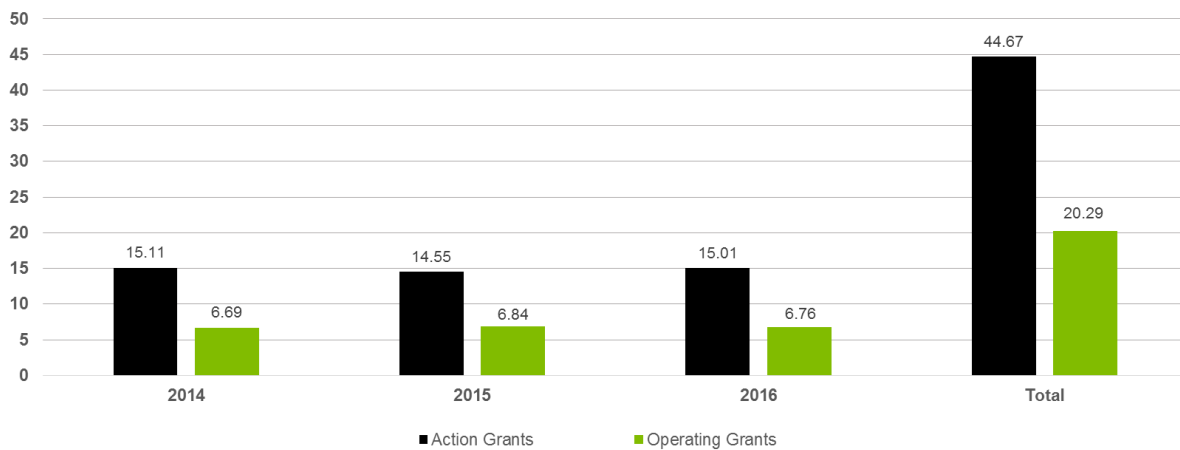
Source: Study Team, based on DG HOME annual reports on EfCP activities[26]

On the **numbers of grants awarded**, the table below shows the total number of Operating Grants for both strands. The figures following this, break down the number of Action Grants per activity type, i.e. Remembrance projects, Town-Twinning, Networks of Towns, and Civil Society Projects, with the respective amount of money dedicated to each type of Action Grant.

Table 2: Operating Grants – number of projects

Operating Grants	2014	2015	2016
Strand 1	6	6	6
Strand 2	29	31	30
Total	*35*	*37*	*36*

Source: Study Team, based on DG HOME annual reports on EfCP activities[26]

Figure 7: Action Grant - number of projects
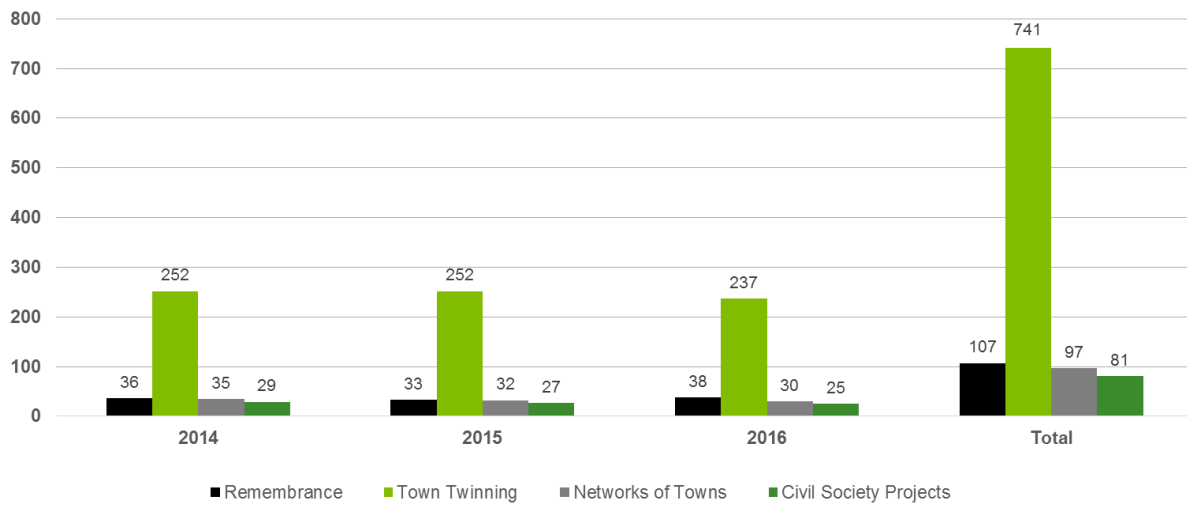
Source: Study Team, based on DG HOME annual reports on EfCP activities[26]

Figure 8: Amount of grant per Action Grant type (in million EUR)
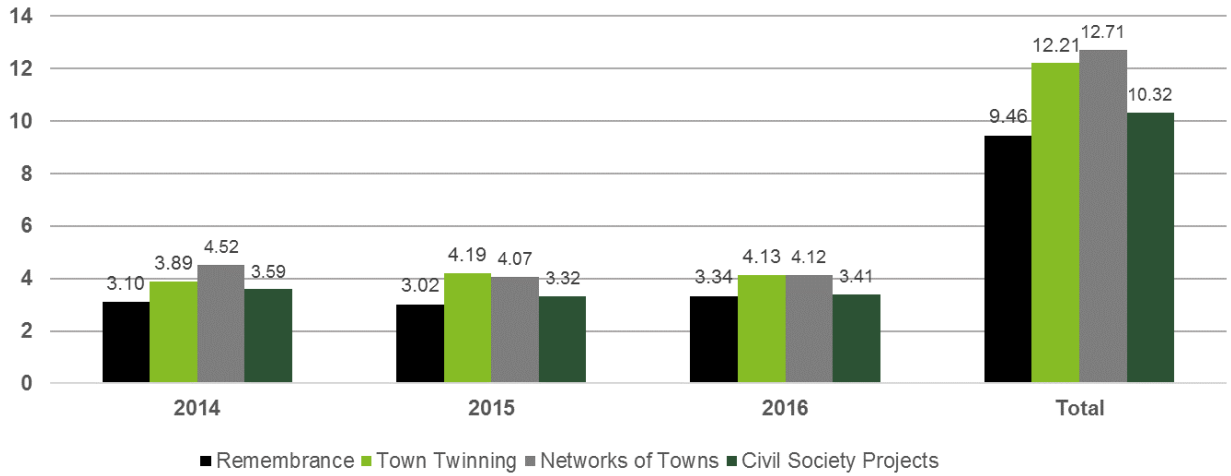
Source: Study Team, based on DG HOME annual reports on EfCP activities[26]

When it comes to the **average amount of grant per project** under each of the four types of Action Grants: a Remembrance Action Grant received on average EUR 90 000, a Town Twinning Action Grant on average EUR 16 000, and a Network of Towns or a Civil Society project EUR 130 000 on average each.

Figure 9: Average amount per Action Grant type, 2014-2016 (in 100 000 EUR)
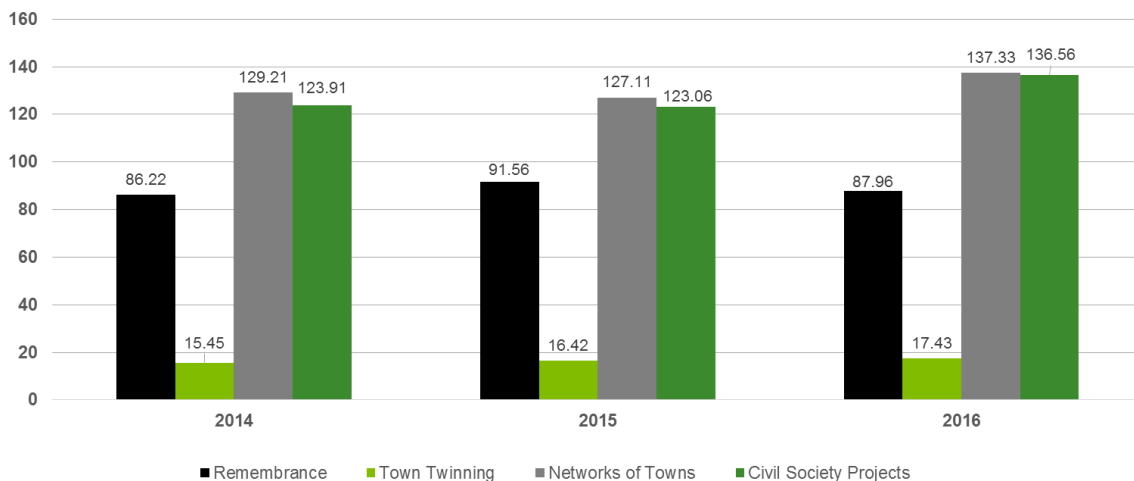
Source: Study team, DG HOME annual reports on the EfCP activities[26]

The **Horizontal Action** of the EfCP is not reported on in the same way as grants under Strand 1 and Strand 2. The budget allocated to horizontal activities is used for operating grants to NCPs, the support to project selection and for communication activities of the programme. As indicated in

the Programme Guide 2014-2017[27] the budget for Horizontal Action is used for analysis and dissemination of results.

The distribution of the budget allocated for Horizontal Action for 2014-2016 is presented in the table below.

Table 3: Horizontal Action spending 2014-2016 (EUR)

	2014		2015		2016	
	Actual	**Budgeted**	**Actual**	**Budgeted**	**Actual**	**Budgeted**
Information structures in Member States and participating countries	714 025	900 000	761 525	900 000	795 000	900 000
Support to project selection (EACEA)	175 560	200 000	200 000	200 000	200 000	200 000
Total	889 585	1 100 000	961 525	1 100 000	995 000	900 000

Source: Study Team, based on DG HOME annual reports on EfCP activities[26]

Under "support to project selection", EACEA engages external experts for the selection process of the projects. There were 51 experts in 2015 and 54 in 2016.

2.1.3. Key figures

Data provided to the Study Team by the Commission and EACEA was analysed and used to draw a picture on the current status of the Programme in terms of key figures and monitoring indicators. Annex III of the EfCP Regulation[1] contains a number of indicators that should be used to measure the performance of the Programme[28]. As explained further in the report, some indicators were not useful for assessing the performance of the programme because of non-comparable data or imprecise reporting. For this reason not all monitoring indicators, as per the Regulation, are reported here. See Section 3.2 for more detail on the methodology and related challenges as well as evaluations question answers to effectiveness (Section 4.2) and efficiency (Section4.3) for more in-depth analysis of the programme.

Number of applications submitted to the Programme

When it comes to applications submitted, as the table below shows, the **number of applications** in 2015 increased under the Strand 1 Action Grants and under Strand 2 Town-Twinning and Networks of Towns. It dropped for Civil Society projects as well as Operating Grants for Strand 2. All in all, the **number of applications for Action Grants** increased in 2015 by 43% compared to 2014, but decreased by 11% in 2016 compared to the previous year. The situation in 2014 may have been caused by the late adoption of the Programme Regulation this year, which only

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[27] Europe for Citizens Programme 2014-2020 Programme Guide, available: https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/eacea-site/files/documents/comm2013003670000en.pdf

[28] In total Annex III of the Regulation contains 15 indicators: five indicators for Specific Objective 1 and 10 indicators for Specific Objective 2.

happened after the start of the budget year with consequent delays of the calls calendar and selection process. Nevertheless, in 2016, there is still a significant increase in applications compared to the first year. The figure below illustrates the number of applications per type of project.

Table 4: Number of applications submitted in 2014-2016

		2014	2015	2016
STRAND 1	Action Grants	472	538	467
	Operating Grants	22	6	6
STRAND 2	Town-twinning	667	1 404	1 093
	Networks of towns	224	339	328
	Civil society projects	538	440	541
	Operating Grants (Strand 2)	139	37	31
Horizontal action	NCPs	25	27	29
Total		**2 087**	**2 791**	**2 496**

Source: Study Team, based on Annual Reports

In 2016, we see an overall drop in the number of applications compared to 2015, with the exception of increased interest in Civil Society Projects. Therefore, despite EACEA reporting that *"the number of applications received during the first semester of 2016 confirms the popularity of the Programme"*[29], by the end of 2016, results were not as positive as might have been expected. The causes of this drop could be an effect of the past very low success rate that discouraged participation. The introduction of much more focused thematic priorities could also have led to less applications.

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[29] EACEA biannual Report 2016, p. 32.

Quality of applications submitted to the Programme and first time applicants

Applications are assessed out of 100 points which are distributed across a number of **criteria** in the application: consistency with the objectives of the Programme and Programme Strand (30%); Quality of the activity plan of the project (35%); Dissemination (15%); Impact and Citizen involvement (20%).

The **quality of applications** has generally been steady under Strand 1, with average scores for all applications received in a range of 80-85 out of 100[30]. There has been more variability under Strand 2 because of a low average score in 2014. The higher number of applications under Strand 2 may explain why the scores are somewhat lower than under Strand 1[31].

Table 5: Average scores of Action Grant and Operating Grant applications in 2014-2016

	2014	2015	2016	2013
Strand 1	84.5	80	82.5	80
Strand 2	53	74	73	71

Source: Study Team, based on Programme monitoring data[32]

The proportion of **first time applicants** has been rising as shown below. It averaged 46% over the period 2014-2016:

Table 6: Proportion of first time applicants in 2014-2016

	2014	2015	2016	2013
Strand 1	43%	45%	50%	40%
Strand 2	40%	44%	53%	40%

Source: Study Team, based on Programme monitoring data[33]

In 2016[34], the proportion of **new beneficiaries** for Strand 1 was 58%, whereas (under Strand 2): 73% for Town-Twinning, 90% for Networks of Towns, and 84% for Civil Society Projects.

When it comes to the **number of projects funded,** it has been decreasing during the current programming period. The table below provides figures on the number of applications received for Strands 1 and 2 compared to the number of projects funded. The cells highlighted in red show a decrease in the selected projects compared to the previous year whereas cells highlighted in green show the opposite.

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[30] On top of the award criteria in the Programme guide, the Commission selects a certain number projects based on the allocated budget for each year. Both the total budget and the intended number of projects to finance are included in the Programme guide.
[31] Strand 2 applications totaled 1 429, 2 183 and 1 962 in 2014, 2015 and 2016 respectively.
[32] Internal data
[33] ibid
[34] No data received for 2014, 2015.

Table 7: Number of projects funded versus number of applications received[35]

Strand	Type of grant	No of appl. received	No of selected projects	No of appl. received	No of selected projects	No of appl. received	No of selected projects
			2014		**2015**		**2016**
STRAND 1	Action Grants	472	36 (8%)	538	33 (6%)	467	38 (8%)
	Operating Grants	22	6 (27%)	6	6 (100%)	6	6 (100%)
STRAND 2	Town-Twinning	667	252 (38%)	1404	252 (18%)	1093	237 (22%)
	Networks of Towns	224	35 (16%)	339	32 (9%)	328	30 (9%)
	Civil Society projects	538	29 (5%)	440	27 (6%)	541	25 (5%)
	Operating Grants	139	29 (21%)	37	31 (84%)	31	30 (97%)
	Total	**2062**	**387**	**2764**	**381**	**2466**	**366**

Source: Study Team, based on DG HOME annual reports on EfCP activities[26]

The following table shows a comparative analysis of the planned grants[36] and the grants *actually awarded*.

Table 8: Planned versus actual grants, 2014-2016

	Planned number of grants	Number of grants awarded
Strand 1 – Action Grants	142	107
Strand 1 – Operating Grants	21	18
Strand 2 – Town-Twinning	1000	741
Strand 2 – Network of towns	177	97
Strand 2 – Civil society	102	90
Strand 2 – Operating Grants	86	91

Source: Study Team, based on DG HOME annual reports on EfCP activities[26]

Overall, there has been a decrease in the number of projects receiving grants compared to the planning in the Commission Implementing Decisions[46], with the exception of an increased number for Operating Grant beneficiaries under Strand 2. However, one should note that the decrease mentioned above was due to the higher amount of grant awarded per project following the higher number of participants per project.

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[35] Numbers are rounded
[36] As per Commission Implementing Decisions 2014-2016, n[46].

Budget Distribution

The following tables present the **distribution of budget** across the different strands, types of grant and eligible countries involved.

Table 9: Action Grant beneficiaries 2014-2016

ACTION GRANTS – STRAND 1 – Remembrance			
	2014	**2015**	**2016**
Number of beneficiaries	36	33	38
Total amount of grants	*EUR 3 104 000*	*EUR 3 021 560*	*EUR 3 342 500*
Variation in amounts	EUR 25 250-100 000	EUR 27 250 -100 000	EUR 30 250-100 000
Most represented EU Member State	IT (4), BE (3)	FR (4), DE (3)	FR (3), IT (3)
Non-EU Member State	Only EU.	Only EU.	BA, MK, RS
ACTION GRANTS – STRAND 2 – Town-Twinning			
	2014	**2015**	**2016**
Number of beneficiaries	252	252	237
Total amount of grants	*EUR 3 890 000*	*EUR 4 138 000*	*EUR 4 131 500*
Variation of grants	EUR 5 000-25 000	EUR 5 000-25 000	EUR 5 000-25 000
Most represented EU Member State	HU, CZ, PL, RO, SK and IT	HU, CZ, PL, RO, SK and IT	HU, CZ, PL, RO, SK and IT
Non-EU Member State	RS	MK, RS	BA, RS
ACTION GRANTS – STRAND 2 – Networks of Towns			
	2014	**2015**	**2016**
Number of beneficiaries	35	32	30
Total amount of grants	*EUR 4 522 500*	*EUR 4 067 500*	*EUR 4 120 000*
Variation of grants	EUR 60 000-150 000	EUR 60 000-150 000	EUR 90 000-150 000
Most represented EU Member State	IT (8), DE (4)	IT (6), HU (4)	IT (7), HU (3)
Non-EU Member State	MK	RS	RS
ACTION GRANTS – STRAND 2 – Civil Society Projects			
	2014	**2015**	**2016**
Number of beneficiaries	29	27	25
Total amount of grants	*EUR 3 593 250*	*EUR 3 322 750*	*EUR 3 413 750*
Variation of grants	EUR 37 500-150 000	EUR 57 750-150 000	EUR 20 250-150 000
Most represented EU Member State	BE (3), IT (2)	DE (2), IT (2)	BE (2), IT (2)
Non-EU Member State	Only EU	ME, MK, RS	RS

Table 10: Operating Grants beneficiaries 2014-2016[37]

ACTION GRANTS – STRAND 1 – Remembrance			
	2014	**2015**	**2016**
Number of beneficiaries	6	6	6
Total amount of grants	EUR 1 213 966	EUR 1 213 466	EUR 1 213 467
Variation of grants	EUR 165 000-250 000		
OPERATING GRANTS – STRAND 2 Civil Society Projects			
	2014	**2015**	**2016**
Number of beneficiaries	29	31	30
Total amount of grants	EUR 5 474 702	EUR 5 627 984	EUR 5 549 678
Variation of grants	EUR 58 000-600 000		
The top five EU MS where Operating Grant(Strand 1 and 2) beneficiaries were located:	*FR (10), BE (7), DE (4), UK (3), PL (3)*	*FR (9), BE (9), UK (4), DE (4), ES, PL (2)*	*FR (9), BE (9), UK (4), DE (4), ES (2)*

Source: Study team, DG HOME annual reports on the EfCP activities[38], and publicly available data at: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/europe-for-citizens_en.

Geographical coverage of projects and transnational partnerships

When it comes to the **geographical coverage** of funded projects, the country of origin of the lead beneficiaries in projects in 2014, 2015 and 2016[39] is presented in the figure below.

As the figure below shows, **Hungary** is consistently the country with the largest number of lead beneficiaries. Approximately 15% of Programme grants between 2014-2016 were awarded to Hungary. **Slovakia** and **Italy** are also close in terms of the number of projects with approximately 13% and 11% of grants being awarded to these countries respectively.

Finally, in **transnational partnerships,** which include different types of stakeholders, the average number of types of stakeholders was 1.6 in 2014, and increased to 1.8 in 2015 and in 2016[40].

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[37] The percentage of co-funding ranged from approx. 1.4-89.9% .

[38] ibid.

[39] The number of project lead beneficiaries in the Member States is not provided in Programme reports for 2014. Thus figures are based on the project list on the online EfCP project database: http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/europe-for-citizens/projects.

[40] Baseline 2013: Average number of types of stakeholders was 1.3.

Figure 10: Countries of lead beneficiaries of Action Grants in 2014- 2016[41]

2014   2015   2016
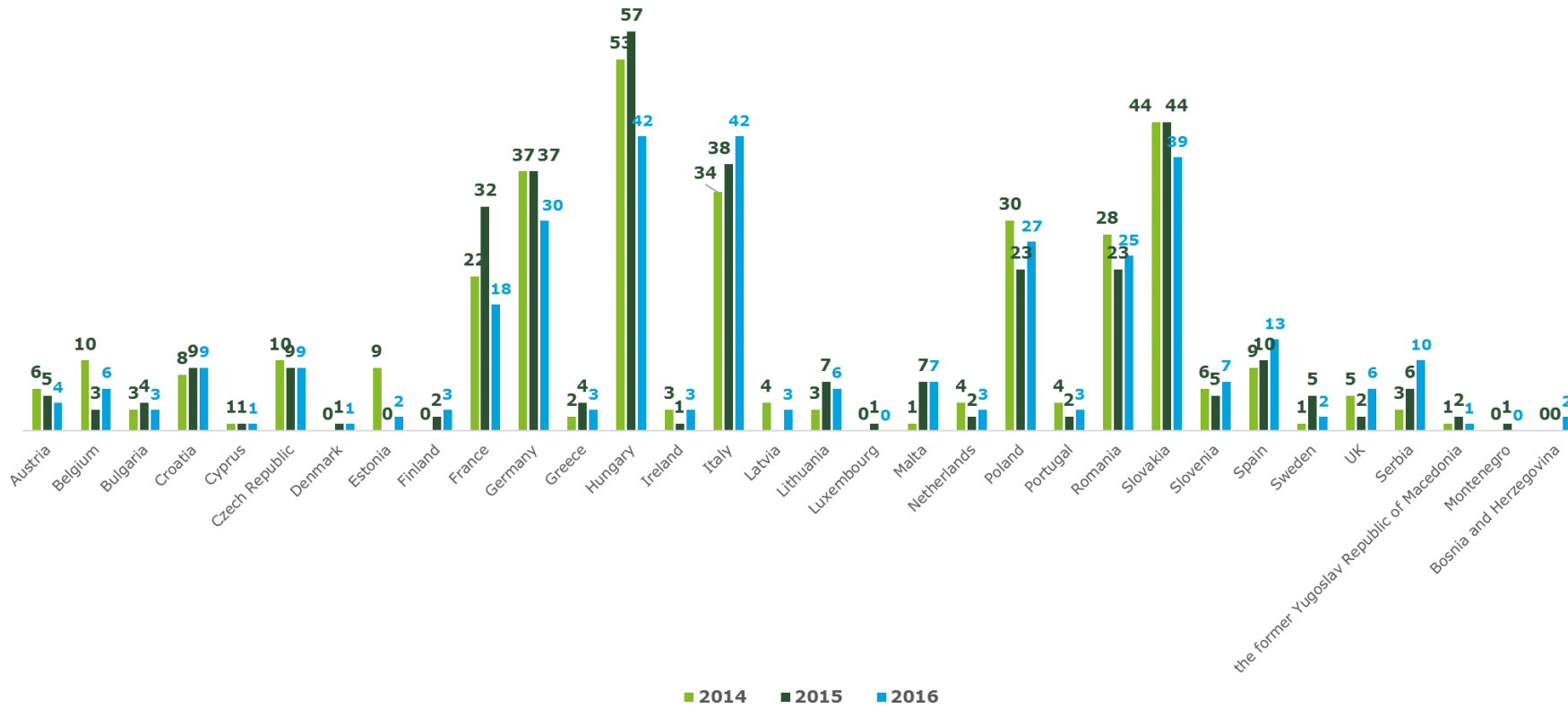
Source: EfCP Project Results and online project database[42]

[41] Participating countries to the Programme include all Member States of the EU. EFTA countries party to the EEA agreement and acceding, candidate countries and potential candidate countries can also participate provided they enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Commission. Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia have signed MOUs (before 2014) for these purposes.

[42] http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/europe-for-citizens/projects

3. The evaluation of the EfCP 2014-2020

3.1. Scope of this evaluation

As a mid-term evaluation, the evaluation study covered the **period** from **April 2014 to mid-2016**. Nevertheless, the Study Team analysed the complete 2016 dataset, and whenever applicable, the whole year was taken into account.

In **geographical terms**, in addition to all EU Member States, beneficiaries can come from the EFTA countries party to the EEA Agreement[43], acceding, candidate and potential candidates countries (benefiting from a pre-accession strategy[44]), and overseas countries and territories[45]. Over the two and a half years covered by the evaluation, in addition to the EU Member States, only Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, the Republic of Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia took part in the Programme, as either operating or Action Grant beneficiaries.

Over this period, a total of **1 215 projects were co-funded under EfCP**, with a total budget of some **EUR 67 million**, and reaching out around **7 million citizens** (direct and indirect participants).

The **annual priorities** for the years 2014 and 2015 were as in the table below. In 2016, **multi-annual priorities** were introduced for the first time; they cover the period 2016-2020 and replace the former system of annual priorities.

Table 11: Programme priorities 2014-2016

Year	Specific priorities for Strand 1: *European Remembrance*	Specific priorities for Strand 2: *Democratic engagement and civic participation*
2014	- *The 100th anniversary of the beginning of the World War I* - *The 25th anniversary of the Berlin Wall fall* - *The 10 years of the enlargement of the EU to central and Eastern Europe*	*The 2014 elections to the European Parliament and citizens' participation in the democratic life of Europe*
2015	*The 70th anniversary of the end of the WWII (focus on World War II, the associated rise of*	*Debate on the future of Europe*

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[43] The agreement on the European Economic Area (EEA) entered into force on 1 January 1994, bringing together the European Union and three of the EFTA States — Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway— in a single market, referred to as the "Internal Market".

[44] The pre-accession strategy sets out a framework for each candidate country's accession process, available on: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/policy/glossary/terms/preaccession-strategy_en

[45] Recital (12) of Council Regulation (EU) No 390/2014 of 14 April 2014 establishing the 'Europe for Citizens' programme for the period 2014-2020

Year	Specific priorities for Strand 1: *European Remembrance*	Specific priorities for Strand 2: *Democratic engagement and civic participation*
	intolerance that enabled crimes against humanity, and its consequences for the post-war architecture of Europe)	
2016	- *Civil society and civic participation under totalitarian regimes* - *Ostracism and loss of citizenship under totalitarian regimes: drawing the lessons for today* - *Democratic transition and accession to the European Union* *Commemorations of major historical turning points in recent European history*: - *Beginning of the Spanish Civil War (1936)* - *Political and social mobilisation in central Europe (1956)* - *Beginning of the Yugoslav Wars (1991)* - *Adoption of the United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees in relation with the post WWII refugee situation in Europe (1951)*	- *Understanding and debating Euroscepticism* - *Solidarity in times of crisis* - *Combatting stigmatisation of "immigrants" and building counter narratives to foster intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding* - *Debate on the future of Europe*

Source: Study team, based on Commission Implementing Decisions, 2014, 2015, 2016[46]

3.1. The Intervention Logic of the Programme

The figure below presents the EfCP's Intervention Logic (IL). This supports the reader in better understanding the objectives of the Programme and how its activities are expected to lead to the achievement of these objectives.

The relationships depicted in the IL below supported the Study Team in developing the Analytical Framework (see Annex A) for this study which guided us towards replying to the evaluation questions.

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[46] Commission Implementing Decision C(2013)7160 concerning the adoption of the 2014 work programme and the financing for the implementation of the Europe for Citizens Programme; Commission Implementing Decision C(2014)9220 on the adoption of the 2015 work programme and the financing for the implementation of the Europe for Citizens Programme; Commission Implementing Decision C(2015)9186 on the adoption of the 2016 work programme and the financing for the implementation of the Europe for Citizens Programme;

Figure 11: The Intervention Logic

The Europe for Citizens Programme 2014 – 2020

Outcomes

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

Long-term results

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

Short-term results

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

Outputs

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

Outputs

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

Inputs

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

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

General objectives

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

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

Specific objectives

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

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

Overall aim

Bring the European Union **closer to citizens**

Source: Study Team

3.2. Methodology of the evaluation and related challenges

To reply to the evaluation questions defined by the evaluation's Terms of Reference, the Study Team deployed a number of **methodological tools**. In particular, the team:

- performed extensive desk research of relevant documents;
- interviewed 14 EU officials and 4 members of the Programme Committee, as well as 4 Operating Grant beneficiaries;
- ran a web-based survey in English targeting both beneficiaries and unsuccessful applicants;
- organised a workshop with 20 members of the Civil Dialogue Group[47];
- ran 3 online focus groups with a total of 17 National Contact Points[48];
- carried out 20 case studies[49] of Action Grants[50] under both Strands; and
- analysed the results of a public consultation about the mid-term evaluation of the Europe for Citizens Programme 2014-2020.

A detailed presentation of the methodology can be found in Annex B. The analysis of the web-based survey as well as of the public consultation are included in Annexes C and D respectively.

Although significant efforts have been made to involve as many stakeholders as possible via the different methodological tools, the evaluation encountered certain **challenges** which by their nature could not always be mitigated. These should be borne in mind when reading the answers to the evaluation questions.

The main challenges experienced per methodological tool and the degree to which they affected the outcome of this evaluation were:

- **Council Regulation indicators versus Impact Assessment indicators**. The quality and usefulness for our evaluation work of the 'performance' and 'impact/result' indicators as included in the Council Regulation and the Impact Assessment respectively, varied. In terms of quality, the indicators in the Regulation (Annex III) and those formulated in the Impact Assessment were not always directly comparable. The formulation of the indicators in both sources, although similar, were slightly different in some cases which resulted in a collection of data that was inconsistent as a whole and difficult to

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[47] The majority of workshop participants were current or past beneficiaries of the programme, while a small minority were first-time beneficiaries. The group of attendees was composed of two NGOs, eight associations, six organisations and networks of organisations, three research centres and one think tank. The vast majority of participants were Brussels-based, although some were EU-focused but based elsewhere and a small number were national organisations.

[48] The 17 attendees represented NCPs hosted in a variety of institutions, including ministries (of Foreign or EU affairs, Culture, etc.), governmental bodies and other entities to which the NCP functioning grant has been awarded by the competent national authorities. They had different levels of experience of the 2014-2020 programme and its predecessors.

[49] The 20 case studies were selected at random based on a set of criteria agreed with the Commission. However, given the relatively small sample of cases, the representativeness of the case studies of the programme as a whole is necessarily limited.

[50] Strand 1: 7 case studies and Strand 2: Town-Twinning: 4 case studies; Networks of Towns: 4 case studies; Civil Society Projects: 5 case studies.

analyse. In terms of usefulness to our work, indicators were either not very precisely presented or did not offer much insight into the functioning of the Programme. There were no straightforward baselines for all indicators either. For the evaluation, it was therefore difficult to make extensive use of the monitoring data received but only to use some of them as a contribution to our findings.

- **Reporting data.** It was often the case that figures reported in the DG HOME annual activity reports on EfCP's activities were diverse from figures publicly available on the Programme's dedicated webpage (i.e. list of beneficiaries, budget awarded). In our analysis, we only refer to the figures included in the DG HOME annual activity reports on EfCP's activities and when also including the data available online, we indicated so.

- **EU-level interviews.** It is reasonable to presume that some interviewees may be biased (positively or negatively) by their own experiences with the Programme. This was taken into account when triangulating the data.

- **Web-based survey**. The overall response rate (80 replies) was regarded as satisfactory by the Commission. However the results were not fully representative of each profile as only 5 responses were from unsuccessful applicants despite efforts made by the Commission and EACEA to promote the survey on their webpages and social media. However, when analysing the survey questions it was found that in fact many of the beneficiaries were also unsuccessful applicants (as indicated by the number of applications they submitted and how many were accepted). It is likely then that respondents preferred to answer as beneficiaries rather than unsuccessful applicants although they were encouraged to do both if applicable. Unfortunately, due to the low number of responses to the questions aimed specifically at unsuccessful applicants, the findings from this groups cannot be regarded as representative. Yet, whenever the questions to beneficiaries and unsuccessful applicants were identical, we merged those replies.

- **Public Consultation.** While the number of responses to the public consultation run by the European Commission was positive, the response from individual citizens was disappointing. Two-thirds of respondents responded on behalf of an organisation or in their professional capacity. Certain countries were over-represented, even relative to their size (i.e. Italy, France and Germany). Overall this does not invalidate the results, but dictates caution at a granular level, and the responses were carefully analysed with these contextual factors in mind.

4. Answering the evaluation questions

Data collected throughout the evaluation was structured according to the Analytical Framework (included in Annex A), allowing the evaluators to make sure all data necessary to answer the evaluation questions are collected. Efforts were made to analyse all quantifiable data available and where quantification was not possible (due to data limitations or inconsistencies), evidence is provided qualitatively. It should be noted that most qualitative information was provided by stakeholders and thus sources are referenced[51] with a view to highlighting potential biases and limitations to the data. See Section 3.2 for more information on the methodology and related challenges.

The structure of the findings presented below also follows the evaluation questions and judgement criteria included in the Analytical Framework, and the findings themselves are based on the indicators included there.

4.1. Relevance

As per the Commission Better Regulation Guidelines, "relevance looks at the objectives of the EU intervention being evaluated to see how well they (still) match the (current) needs and problems"[52].

This section first looks at the **initial needs** which the EfCP was set up to meet and whether they have evolved over time. The **general objectives** of the Programme are then assessed on their appropriateness to meet those needs. The question to be answered is:

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

Secondly, the **activities of the Programme** under Strand 1 and Strand 2 are assessed on their appropriateness for achieving the **objectives**. The questions to be answered are:

- To what extent are the programme's activities still relevant to contribute to citizens' understanding of the Union, its shared history and diversity?
- To what extent are the programme's activities still relevant to foster European citizenship and to improve conditions for civic and democratic participation at the Union level?

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[51] Without revealing the identity of individual stakeholders.
[52] Better Regulation Guidelines, Chapter VI: Guidelines on Evaluation and Fitness Checks.

4.1.1. Relevance of the EfCP's objectives to the problems to be addressed

To assess the relevance of the objectives of the EfCP to the needs in the EU, we firstly look at the initial needs for which the Programme was set up, and whether the objectives were relevant to the objectives at that time. In line with the Better Regulation Guidelines, it is important to also establish whether these have changed over time and if the initial needs are *still* relevant or have evolved. We then assess the relevance of the objectives of the Programme against these current needs in the light of the data collected during the evaluation.

The needs to be addressed by the EfCP and how they have evolved

The EfCP 2014-2020 was proposed during a period of financial, economic and social crisis, but also a crisis of confidence. It was felt important in this context, where it was particularly important to combine forces in combating the crisis, to make the role and achievements of the EU known to its citizens[53]. Furthermore, the sense of "being an EU citizen" was not a reality among the EU population[54]. This manifested itself in increased detachment of citizens from the EU project and "a reduced interest in EU matters"[55]. Against this background, it was deemed appropriate by the Impact Assessment that accompanied the proposal for the Programme for the European Commission "to take action [via the EfCP] to promote civic participation, transform citizens from spectators into actors willing to contribute to the European renewal, be it through participation in the political life or through engagement into their community at whatever level"[56].

The initial need to be addressed by the EfCP was explained in the 2011 Impact Assessment accompanying the proposal for the 2014-2020 Programme[57]. The Impact Assessment cited a number of factors that indicated the need for the EfCP including:

- Eurobarometer results on the trust of EU citizens in the EU;
- Eurobarometer results on the sense of belonging citizens feel in the EU;
- Euroscepticism; and
- Reduced interest in EU matters (evidenced by European election voter turnout).

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[53] Proposal for a Regulation of the Council establishing for the period 2014-2020 the programme "Europe for Citizens" to promote European citizenship SEC (2011) 1562 FINAL.

[54] Commission Staff Working paper - Impact Assessment Accompanying the document: Proposal for a Regulation of the Council establishing for the period 2014-2020 the programme "Europe for Citizens" to promote European citizenship SEC(2011) 1562 FINAL, pg 7: "the Eurobarometer survey of August 2011 found that less than half (41%) of European citizens trust the EU or feel a sense of belonging to it."

[55] Impact Assessment (ibid).

[56] Impact Assessment (ibid).

[57] Impact Assessment (ibid).

While it was not expected that the Programme alone would make a radical difference to these figures, the Impact Assessment used this data as the best proxy available for identifying the problems in society that needed to be addressed.

The paragraphs below expand on the trends in each of these indicators since the Impact Assessment and introduction of the Programme to assess whether the initial needs at the time of its proposal are *still* relevant to the current needs in the EU.[58]

As shown in the figure below, as of spring 2011, only 41% of citizens tended to **trust the EU**. This ratio dropped significantly in the following three years again, rose again in spring 2015, before dropping back to close to 2011 levels against in spring 2016.

Figure 12: Eurobarometer data on feeling of trust in the EU among EU citizens
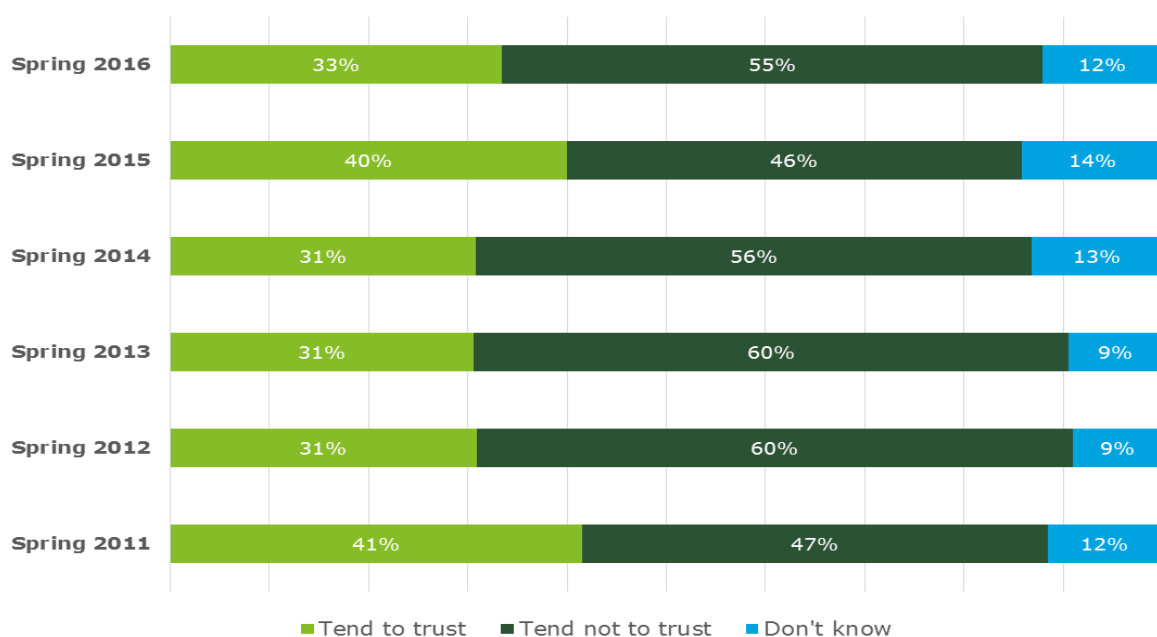
Source: Study Team, based on Eurobarometer results[59]

Another key parameter for the measurement of current needs is the Eurobarometer on the "**feeling of being an EU citizen**" among the EU population. Eurobarometer statistics for autumn in 2011 show that 62% of EU citizens felt a sense of EU citizenship and this figure had risen to 67% by autumn 2016, with some variability in the meantime.

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[58] In line with the Better Regulation Guidelines p 58 and tool #42 of the Better Regulation toolbox.
[59] Between 2011 and 2016, the Eurobarometer produced results on the question "Do you trust the EU" twice per year (in spring & autumn). For illustrative purposes, only the results of spring are shown. For full results see: http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Chart/getChart/chartType/gridChart//themeKy/18/groupKy/97/savFile/187

Figure 13: Eurobarometer data on feeling of being an EU citizen
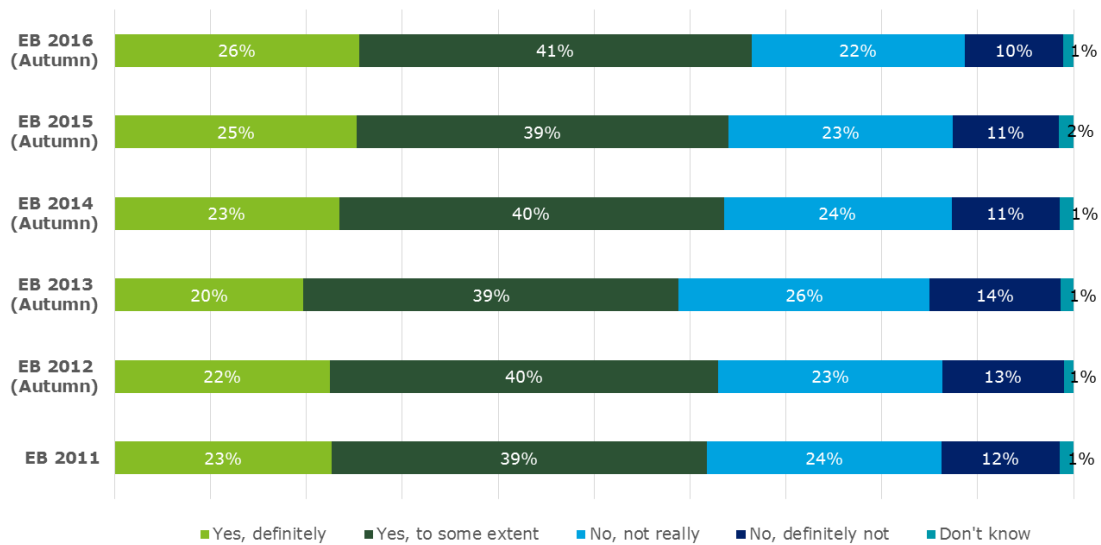
Source: Study Team, based on Eurobarometer results[60]

Overall, the responses in the Eurobarometer surveys between 2014-2016 the feeling of trust in the EU and on the sense of being an EU citizen do not differ much from the surveys before the programme (i.e. from 2011 to 2013), therefore **pointing to a continued need for intervention in this area**.

Along with Eurobarometer statistics, it is relevant also to consider the issues of **Euroscepticism and interest in EU matters,** which the Impact Assessment also identified as indicators of need. As indicated in the Impact Assessment, "the gap between the EU and its citizens materialises in increasing detachment, even Euroscepticism… and a reduced interest in EU matters"[61]. The Impact Assessment quoted the figures on voter turnout in European elections as evidence of the reduced interest, dropping from almost 62% in 1979 to 45.47% in 2004 and 43% in 2009).

There can be little doubt that Euroscepticism has risen over the last few years and the Commission recognises it as a phenomenon for discussion, debate and action[62]. In the 2014 elections, parties sceptical of the EU or protest parties (for example the Europe of Freedom and Democracy Party and "non-attached members")[63] took up about 25% of seats at

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[60] Between 2012 and 2016, the Eurobarometer produced results on the question "Do you feel like an EU citizen" twice per year (in spring & autumn). Only results of autumn are shown. For full results see: http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Chart/getChart/themeKy/50/groupKy/263.

[61] n54, pg 7.

[62] Highlighting that the rise of Euroscepticism in the Member States is "disrupting traditional political divisions", Understanding and Debating Euroscepticism was included as a programme priority in 2016, see pg 4: https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/eacea-site/files/priorities_2016_en_full_text_en.pdf

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

Parliament. The voter turnout was the lowest ever recorded (42.61%)[64]. Despite the benefits of EU membership, many citizens consider the EU "too distant or "too interfering in their day-today lives" and are unsure about how the EU improves their lives[65].

The **White Paper on the Future of Europe**[66] points out that the "various changes affecting the world today and the real sense of insecurity felt by many have given rise to a growing disaffection with mainstream politics and institutions at all levels"[67]. These changes include the vote of the United Kingdom to leave the Union[68] and the challenges Europe is facing in the economy (recovering from the financial crisis), the refugee crisis and terrorist attacks in European cities.

Thus, at these challenging times, it is clear that there is significant importance in raising awareness of the EU, citizens' rights as members of the Union and encouraging debate and reflection on citizens understanding of the EU.

As the European Parliament has pointed out, although being a "long key objective of European Policy makers", bringing the European Union closer to its citizens "has never been as important as it is the present situation"[69].

Assessment of the relevance of the objectives to the current needs

We now assess whether the objectives of the Programme are appropriate for addressing these needs based on data collected during the evaluation. The general objectives are contained in Article 1 of the EfCP Regulation[1]:

> *Under the overall aim of bringing the Union closer to citizens, **the general objectives** of the Programme are the following:*
> - *to contribute to citizens' understanding of the Union, its history and diversity;*
> - *to foster European citizenship and to improve conditions for civic and democratic participation at Union level.*

The needs discussed in the previous section can be summarised as the need to build trust and a sense of belonging to and encouraging interest in the EU. They were summed up in the first words of the proposal for the Programme as: "Encouraging and facilitating citizens' wider involvement in the European Union and what it stands for"[53].

To build trust and a sense of belonging in the EU, the Commission took action in proposing the EfCP *"to promote civic participation, transform citizens from spectators into actors willing*

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[64] Results of the 2014 European Elections, Turnout, available: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/elections2014-results/en/turnout.html

[65] The White Paper presented by the European Commission on 1 March sets out possible paths for the future of Europe, pg 6, available: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/white_paper_on_the_future_of_europe_en.pdf

[66] ibid.

[67] Ibid, p. 9.

[68] Article 50 of the TFEU was triggered by the UK on 29 March 2017.

[69] European Parliament Report on the implementation of Council Regulation (EU) No 390/2014 of 14 April establishing the 'Europe for Citizens' programme for the period 2014-2020 (2015/2328(INI)), p 4.

to contribute to the European renewal, be it through participation in the political life or through engagement into their community at whatever level"[70]. The Regulation itself also points out the importance of *"keeping the memories of the past alive as a means of moving beyond the past and building the future"*[71]. These needs are met by both objectives simultaneously i.e. by enhancing citizens' understanding of the Union, its history and diversity and by improving conditions for civic and democratic participation at Union level.

In addition to this objective assessment, stakeholders consistently noted the relevance of the Programme throughout our consultation with them. Members of the **CDG**, **Operating Grant Beneficiaries** and **EU officials** noted that the EfCP is more important than ever in the current political context. Furthermore, the Programme's objectives were also thought to be relevant and up-to-date by most of the **NCPs** consulted.

On the **formulation of the general objectives**, NCPs had mixed views on their clarity to potential applicants. Some NCPs stated that the breadth of the objectives is positive since it allows a variety of stakeholders to relate to the programme as well as allowing for a number of different activities to be proposed by potential applicants. Others stated that the broad formulation confuses applicants and a great deal of NCPs' time is spent on explaining what activities can and cannot be financed under the programme.

> The objectives of the programme were and remain relevant to the problems to be addressed since the needs it was designed to contribute to addressing are still relevant. Given the arguably unprecedented challenges faced by the EU at present, it is evident that there is still an important need to enhance citizens' understanding of the EU, its history and diversity as well as encourage debate and reflection on citizens' understanding of the EU.

4.1.2. Relevance of EfCP's activities to its objectives

In this section we assess whether the activities that are carried out within the Programme, under the different strand measures, are still relevant for meeting its two general objectives (as mentioned above).

Strand 1 (European remembrance) activities

We understand "activities" as the types of activities carried out in execution of funded projects. As activities are proposed by applicants to the Programme, there is no exhaustive list of different types conducted under each of the strands. We have therefore drawn on the information gathered through seven project **case studies** selected to provide as representative samples as possible in order to gain a better view of the types of activities carried out under the programme. Under Strand 1 (Remembrance) projects, we found that activities include:

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[70] n54, pg 7.
[71] Recital 9 of EfCP Regulation (n1).

- Research in the relevant area of remembrance (e.g. period of war, historical event etc.);
- Workshops, conferences and debates (discussing the relevant topic among target groups);
- Formal and informal education (e.g. teach-the-teacher sessions in formal and memorial visits, exhibitions in the latter);
- Production of content or materials in the form of written articles, drama, art, film and documentaries;
- Competitions in various forms (e.g. art, film and story-writing) between participants in different partner countries;
- Awareness-raising through various media channels (e.g. TV, radio, newspaper, social media).

On assessment of the seven case studies that fell under this Strand, it was found that the activities conducted within the projects are appropriate for the achievement of the programme objectives, both at a general level and the more detailed level provided for in Annex I of the Regulation, i.e. "activities that encourage reflection on European cultural diversity and on common values in the broadest sense … initiatives to reflect on the causes of totalitarian regimes in Europe's modern history…and to commemorate the victims of their crimes… activities concerning other defining moments and reference points in recent European history…".

Often, one activity can meet a number of aims, strengthening the relevance of the activity to achieving the overall goal of the Programme. For example, the production of short stories by students in various countries on aspects of the World Wars for submission to a competition is relevant for both encouraging students to increase their knowledge of shared history while highlighting the diversity in understanding between different cultures and society.

More generally speaking, the relevance of activities under Strand 1 was also supported by stakeholders responding to the public consultation: **91% of 322 respondents indicated that remembrance activities were "very important" (57%) or "rather important" (34%).** The majority of the responses to the public consultation however came from beneficiaries or unsuccessful applicants to the programme. However, even when excluding these respondents from the sample (to reduce the potential bias) results were almost the same[72]. Since individual citizens were scarce among the public consultation respondents, results are interpreted with caution[73].

Compared to the **previous programme**, participants in the NCP focus group also noted that the stronger focus on European history in this programme iteration is appreciated by many organisations, institutions and municipalities in their countries[74]. At the same time, a large majority of NCPs were in consensus that the current structure of the programme achieves an appropriate balance between past and present. The two aspects are very closely linked and it

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[72] Of the 97 respondents indicating that they were either aware of the programme but had no practical experience with it, partook in an event or project or indicated themselves as being in the "other category", 91% **indicated that remembrance activities were "very important" (56%) or "rather important" (35%).**
[73] As mentioned previously in Methodology (Section 3.2).
[74] During our focus groups, three NCPs noted that the focus of the programme on Remembrance had been increased with the revision of the new programme and this change was viewed as a positive development.

was noted that the lessons learned from the past are an essential part of a healthy debate on the future of the EU.

Strand 2 (Democratic engagement and civic participation) activities

Activities under Strand 2 are defined by its three sub-strands (i.e. Town-Twinning, Networks of Towns and Civil Society projects). The relevance of the activities under these three categories is assessed below.

Town-Twinning

Town-Twinning involves bringing together two or more communities from different countries to partake in a number of activities linked to the objectives of the programme.

As with activities under Strand 1, there is no exhaustive list of activities that can be proposed by the twinned towns. From our four Town-Twinning case studies, we saw the following types of activities being carried out:

- Visits to local attractions and historical sites;
- Meetings and seminars on topics in line with the objectives or the annual and multi-annual priorities of the programme
- Thematic conferences and debates (e.g. on EU policy, EU funding, environmental issues, youth employment etc.);
- Social activities (e.g. festivals, dinners, sports etc.).

On **assessment of the case studies**, the link between the activity and the general objectives of the Programme was sometimes difficult to align due to the interpretation of "civic participation in its broadest sense" (as stated in Annex 1 to the Regulation)[75]. At present, the general objective connected to Strand 2 aims to foster European citizenship and to improve conditions for civic and democratic participation at Union level. As supported by the specific objectives and stated in Annex I of the Regulation, initiatives that develop opportunities for mutual understanding, intercultural dialogue, solidarity and societal engagement are considered as activities of civic participation.

Despite this, analysis of the case studies raised concerns on the strength of two out of the four Town-Twinning projects in contributing to the objective of civic participation at EU level. In other words, it was questionable whether some activities (e.g. visits to local attractions, social events) improved the conditions for citizens to go from being "spectators" to being "actors" in the EU[76], while strictly speaking being in accordance with the Regulation. An EU

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[75] Annex 1 of Council Regulation (EU) No 390/2014 of 14 April 2014 establishing the 'Europe for Citizens' programme for the period 2014-2020. Activities eligible for Strand 2 in the wording of Annex 1 are those which "cover civic participation in the broadest sense, and … focus in particular on structuring methods to ensure that funded activities have a lasting effect… preference to initiatives and projects with a link to the Union political agenda… may also cover projects and initiatives that develop opportunities for mutual understanding, intercultural dialogue, solidarity, societal engagement and volunteering at Union level."

[76] The 2011 Impact Assessment (n55) states that the programme "seeks to encourage and invite the large group of "non-converted" – those who would normally not seek to influence or take part in EU affairs - to take a first step towards involvement by going from being "spectators" to being "actors" – whatever the (EU related) topic or format, as long as it is trans-national or has a European dimension", pg 17.

dimension is not required as Annex 1 to the Regulation makes clear. However, there is a stated preference for that dimension, and that dimension was found to be weak in some of these activities, thus raising question marks over the relevance of those particular activities at very least to the intent of the Programme and its objectives.

Consultation with some stakeholders also presented **concerns** on the appropriateness of Town-Twinning in general for responding to the general objectives. We heard during the strategic and Operating Grant beneficiary interviews that the relevance of Town-Twinning under the programme is doubted. Concerns were expressed both in terms of the appropriateness of Town-Twinning for enhancing citizenship as well as ensuring a focus on EU priorities. Furthermore, in one **focus group with the NCPs**, half the participants suggested that there should be more focus on other types of projects (notably Civil Society Projects) rather than Town-Twinning. "Bilateral projects often move away from the European dimension" was one supporting statement.

However, results of the public consultation illustrate that Town-Twinning is a positive measure overall with 56% (of 322 respondents) of respondents indicating that it is very important for EU action and 33% indicating that it is important. Although deemed relevant overall, it is found to be the least important area **for EU action compared to the other Action Grant measures,** but only by a very small percentage.

Moreover, in its Report on the implementation of Council Regulation (EU) N°390/2014 of 14 April 2014 establishing the Europe for citizens programme for 2014-2020, the European Parliament pointed out that "*there is a proven value of the existing international twinning of cities and municipalities (Town twinning — Networks of Towns), which enhances mutual understanding between citizens and fosters friendship and cooperation*".

In the same document the Parliament also:

- recognises the success of the city twinning projects all over the EU, and calls on the Member States to promote the scheme among municipalities and to facilitate cooperation; and
- stresses the need to develop town twinning, focusing on ways of making greater use of the scheme, its promotion and results, including the adequate allocation of financial resources.

The **relevance of some Town-Twinning activities to the general objectives of the programme** is evidently **unclear** for some stakeholders, as well as from the assessment of the case studies. However, as a measure overall, Town-Twinning enhances mutual understanding between citizens and fosters "friendship and cooperation"[77]. In comparison to other measures, which respond more directly to the general objectives, Town-Twinning offers a "grassroots" approach to citizenship by involving citizens in local communities in experiencing the basic advantages of the EU such as free movement, cooperation and experiencing cultural diversity which can ultimately lead to an increase sense of belonging to the EU and finally to civic

participation at Union level. Although it may appear less (directly) relevant to the general objectives than other measures, Town-Twinning contributes to the programme objectives.

Networks of Towns

Networks of towns involve the partnership of a number of towns (four or more) on a common theme in a long-term perspective.

From our case studies, we have seen that activities conducted by Networks of Towns include:

- Discussions or workshops on the project theme;
- Visits to local attractions;
- Presentations and information-sharing sessions;
- Competitions in creativity (e.g. between youth in different countries);
- Production of materials (e.g. a booklet on influencing policy making in a certain area, best practice handbook, short films highlighting success stories regarding civic engagement on common issues that face Europe);
- Creation of online platform for sharing best practices.

Based on the case studies, and similar to the situation described above in relation to Town-Twinning and the relevance to the expressed preference of Annex 1 to the Regulation[78] for an EU dimension, the link between the activities and themes with the EU dimension of the programme was sometimes unclear. This confusion is derived however from the lack of guidance in programme documentation rather than to the nature of Networks of Towns themselves. In other words, what is considered as a relevant theme in the context of the programme is perceived as imprecise in the Programme Guide, thus making it difficult to assess the relevance of the activities and themes in the case studies. On balance however, the evidence from the case studies is that Networks of Towns' activities are relevant to the objectives of the programme.

Feedback from stakeholders on the relevance of Networks of Towns is **positive**. The majority of respondents to the public consultation indicated that Networks of Towns are very important (61% of 322 respondents) or important (35% of 322 respondents) for EU intervention. Overall, no negative feedback was received from stakeholders on the relevance of Networks of Towns.

Civil Society Projects

Civil society projects involve promotion of transnational partnerships and networks that directly involve citizens in activities directly linked to Union policies[79]. As with activities under all other strands, there is no restriction on the type of activity that can be funded as long as it aligns with the objectives. However, from our assessment of five case studies on Civil Society Projects we have seen the following activities:

- Research (e.g. data gathering through surveys, case studies etc.);
- Information sessions and conferences;

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[78] Op. cit. [75]
[79] See Programme guide

- Workshops and debates;
- Volunteering programmes;
- Creative sessions (e.g. art);
- Best practice exchanges;
- Submission of proposals to MEPs.

Activities under Civil Society Projects assessed in our case study exercise demonstrated a clear relevance to the Programme's objectives. These case study projects mostly had a strong focus on educating citizens on EU topics and also encouraged their participation in policy discussions.

Feedback from stakeholders on the relevance of Civil Society Projects was **very positive**. The majority of respondents to the public consultation indicated that Civil Society Projects are very important (74% of 322 respondents) or important (24% of 322 respondents) for EU intervention. In particular, Civil Society Projects were highlighted by half of the NCPs in one focus group as projects that need more funding compared to other types of projects.

Overall, no negative feedback was received from stakeholders regarding the relevance of Civil Society Projects.

> The activities within each Strand are relevant overall to the general objectives of the Programme, i.e. to contribute to citizens' understanding of the Union, its shared history and diversity and to foster European citizenship and to improve conditions for civic and democratic participation at the Union level.
>
> However, the degree to which the activities are relevant for contributing to the programme objectives differs among the strand measures. Some activities, namely those under remembrance and Civil Society Projects are directly relevant to the overall objectives since they focus on improving citizens' awareness of Union history and directly involving citizens in civic and democratic participation. The relevance of certain specific activities implemented within Town-Twinning and Networks of Towns is not as clear. However the concepts of such measures are relevant to the objectives overall.

4.2. Effectiveness and Sustainability

As per the Better Regulation Guidelines: "The effectiveness analysis considers the extent to which EU action has been successful in achieving or, in the context of a mid-term evaluation, progressing towards its objectives."

According to the Guidelines, the assessment of the sustainability of an intervention answers the question "How likely are the effects to last after the intervention ends?" Ideally, there will be evidence that the changes caused by an intervention are permanent.

The questions we are asked to answer are:

- To what extent have the activities undertaken in the framework of the EfCP programme been effective in contributing to the programme's general objectives of:

- Contributing to citizens' understanding of the Union, its shared history and diversity; and
- Fostering European citizenship and to improve conditions for civic and democratic participation at Union level?
- To what extent have the activities undertaken in the framework of the EfCP programme been effective in contributing to the programme's specific objective of raising awareness of remembrance, the common history and values of the Union and the Union's aim, namely to promote peace, the values of the Union and the well-being of its peoples, by stimulating debate, reflection and the development of networks?
- To what extent have the activities undertaken in the framework of the EfCP programme been effective in contributing to the programme's specific objective of encouraging the democratic and civic participation of citizens at Union level, by developing citizens' understanding of the Union policy making-process and promoting opportunities for societal and intercultural engagement and volunteering at Union level?
- To what extent have the activities under the horizontal aspect of the Programme been effective in providing analysis, dissemination and use of project results?
- Does participation in the programme appear satisfactory in terms of the balance between new organisations and those which have received support previously?
- To what extent has the EfCP programme been successful in delivering sustainable outcomes in relation to its objectives?

The effectiveness of the EfCP in achieving its general and specific objectives is intrinsically difficult to measure reliably in quantitative terms because many factors outside the Programme's control impact on awareness, understanding and civic engagement. Measurement at or immediately after an activity provides only a snapshot and does not provide information on long-term behaviour change.

We have relied on quantitative data on activity and output levels complemented by qualitative findings for the general and specific objectives. The qualitative findings were mainly derived from the 20 case studies on projects financed by the EfCP. However, the Public Consultation, the stakeholder interviews and focus groups also provided pointers.

The following sections present the findings from this evidence and are structured according to the evaluation questions listed above. Our analysis on the balance in participation between new organisations and those which have received support previously is subsumed into our answers on the extent to which the activities undertaken in the framework of the EfCP been effective in contributing to the Programme's specific objectives.

4.2.1. Effectiveness of the activities in contributing to the Programme's general objectives

The general objectives of the EfCP are outlined in Article 1 (2) of the Regulation establishing the Programme: "Under the overall aim of bringing the Union closer to citizens, the general objectives of the Programme are the following:
(a) to contribute to citizens' understanding of the Union, its history and diversity;

(b) to foster European citizenship and to improve conditions for civic and democratic participation at Union level."

This section presents our findings in relation to the following evaluation question:
- *To what extent have the activities undertaken in the framework of the EfCP programme been effective in contributing to the programme's general objectives?*

The analysis of effectiveness of activities starts with identifying targets or a baseline against which the performance of a programme can be measured. The Impact Assessment which accompanied the proposal for the Regulation establishing the EfCP for 2014-2020 outlined the long term targets and milestones reflected in the programme's general objectives. These were couched in general terms and included the contribution of the programme to the capacity of civil society to influence the European project and its contribution to the overall debate, reflection and cooperation on remembrance, EU integration and history.

The 2011 Impact Assessment notes that a baseline should be established for the Programme's general objectives. There are no specific indicators on the general objectives of the EfCP in the Regulation establishing the Programme. The only indicator referred to in the Programme monitoring information is the percentage of EU citizens feeling European (on the basis of Eurobarometer surveys), with a baseline of 59% in the autumn of 2013. It is difficult to determine the extent to which European citizens have a feeling of being EU citizens at the inception of the new programming period in order to draw a direct comparison with the Programme's medium-term, purely on the Eurobarometer. The review of recent Eurobarometer surveys (presented under "Relevance") indicates that the percentage of EU citizens who definitely or to some extent feel that they are EU citizens slightly increased between 2013 and 2016. While this is a positive development, it is not possible to establish a direct causal link between the EfCP and this increase, as it is unlikely that the EfCP touched all European citizens given its scope and that many other factors can influence the feeling of being an EU citizen.

Providing a contribution on citizens' understanding of the Union, its shared history and diversity is a key aspect of the EfCP. One of the parameters regularly measured by the EU's public opinion tool, the Eurobarometer, is the extent to which citizens feel they understand the EU. According to the latest Standard Eurobarometer from November 2016, the subjective knowledge of how the EU works among citizens has improved since autumn 2013 to reach the highest level measured for this indicator for over ten years, reflected by 54% – an increase of four percentage points of Europeans saying they understand how the European Union works, while 42% disagree and 4% expressed no opinion. However, this is a pointer to the need, but any change in cannot be directly attributed to the EfCP.

The number and quality of initiatives

On the basis of the methodology designed for this evaluation, we used the indicators for measuring outcomes (in complying with the general objectives) contained in the 2011 Impact Assessment and therefore **we assess the contribution of EfCP to its objectives through the number and quality of initiatives** carried out with a view to:

- contributing to enhancing the impact on the EU policy making process;
- strengthening the cohesion in society;
- enhancing the understanding of the role of the EU.

The long-term target or milestones which would results from this were identified as:

- Enhanced capacity of civil society to influence the European project;
- Contributions to the European Years in the form of intellectual input or activities to link the Years with the local and regional realities[80];
- Contributions to political platforms in the run-up to European elections 2014-2019.

It was intended that a baseline would be set for the number and quality of initiatives, but none is so far available.

The Regulation contains no corresponding indicator in relation to the general objectives, and the indicator in the Impact Assessment has been used as a proxy. It should be borne in mind, however, that the Impact Assessment and the Proposal for a Regulation only envisaged a single general objective of civic participation, and the second objective mentioning the remembrance aspect was added before the Regulation was adopted.

The number of initiatives

Strands 1 and 2 of the EfCP support activities which contribute to the Programme's general objectives to enhance citizens' understanding of the Union and civic participation.

The analysis of monitoring data provided by EACEA shows that between 2014 and 2016 **the Programme supported on average 352 projects per year involving at least 1.1 million direct participants and reached an additional 1.3 million indirectly every year. The total number of participants at mid-term for both Strands is 3.3 million direct and almost 4 million indirect participants**. This level of participation is in excess of the achievements of the previous iteration of EfCP which managed to reach (directly and indirectly) close to 7 million citizens from across the EU in its second half between 2011 and 2013, but which had more money available. (The Programme's budget was reduced by 12.7% between programming periods.)

Since this Programme's inception and as of July 2017, **3 950 civil society organisations** have been involved in the programme, i.e. on average more than 1 300 each year. The number of CSOs participating in the EfCP to date is slightly fewer than the 4 250 CSOs which participated in the programme between 2011 and 2013, but it has been consistently increasing each year.

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[80] We note that there is a gap in the European Year series in 2016 and 2017, while the Programme was agreed too late to contribute to political platforms for the 2014 European elections.

This suggests that the target of 1 700 CSOs per year by 2020 [81] is likely to be achieved and that the programme is fostering cooperation among CSOs by bringing a significant number together.

These statistics alone are, of course, not sufficient to determine the extent to which the EfCP has been effective in contributing to the attainment of its general objectives, particularly in the absence of strict baselines or quantified targets for all parameters. Assessing the effectiveness in contributing to the objectives requires cross-referencing the numbers with various types of qualitative data, while bearing in mind the intrinsic difficulty highlighted earlier of distinguishing between the impact of the Programme and other factors (positive and negative) in citizens' environment. That analysis implies **assessing the effectiveness of the EfCP at a more granular level focusing on their quality in order to gauge the effects of the Programme on participants, but also taking into account the overall views of stakeholders**. This enables us to make an informed judgement on the plausible contribution of the EfCP to the attainment of its ambitious objectives.

The quality of initiatives

The monitoring data[82] reviewed during the evaluation indicated that the **quality of projects selected** has been steadily increasing. The average lowest score obtained by the selected projects increased between 2013 and 2016 for both Strands, which is a pointer in the direction of more quality. This can partly be explained by the fact that the projects submitted have become more focused and concrete according to the evidence we collected. According to this evidence, this is the result of applicants having a better understanding of objectives following the revision of the programme in 2014. This brought with it a simplification welcomed by a large majority of stakeholder organisations contributing to the Public Consultation. The NCPs consulted shared similar observations from their interaction with applicants.

The evaluation comprised 20 case studies on projects funded by the EfCP between 2014 and 2016. These were analysed in-depth in order to gauge the **effects on participants of being involved** as a further indication of the quality of the initiatives. In general, the case studies provided an indication that EfCP activities are well anchored in current political and societal issues and the activities undertaken were suitable to plausibly contributing to citizens' understanding of the Union, its shared history and diversity; and fostering European citizen-ship and improving conditions for civic and democratic participation at Union level.

The programme in practice - 1

An example of how the EfCP can contribute to citizens' understanding of the Union, its shared history and diversity is presented by an interdisciplinary Remembrance project for school-age youths, titled *Sound of Silence* and coordinated by European Network Remembrance & Solidarity, which was designed to remind and encourage interpretation of shared history at individual multicultural level through creative forms of education. The main activities were intercultural contacts between the groups of young people of different nationalities (Hungary,

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[81] Indicator 3 in the Working Programme Statements.
[82] Internal monitoring data provided to the study team by EACEA.

Germany and Poland) being inspired by the place of memory connected to the important moments of Europe's 20th century history and using their individual background to contribute to project activities.

Another striking example is an Italian project commemorating the 60th anniversary of the Conference of Messina titled *SMILE (Sharing Messina Ideal, a Lesson for all Europe)* and coordinated by the Consiglio Italiano del Movimento Europeo, a historic moment when an action programme to develop European integration was adopted by the six founding Member States of the EU. This project was also funded through the Remembrance Strand. The project aimed to inform and therefore, enhance knowledge of the EU population and, in particular, of the citizens of countries which have recently joined the EU about the origins of the European integration process. This project contributed to raising the awareness of participants of the EU integration process and mobilised the citizens of Messina and its administration in the organisation of the event.

The EfCP can also pave the way to a greater awareness of European citizenship and seeks to improve conditions for civic and democratic participation at Union level. To illustrate this, an example is a Civil Society project funded in 2016 under Strand 2 (*People's Corner, Raising Local Governance through People's Voice*, coordinated by Associação Backup) aiming to foster more active citizenship by encouraging participation in the community and interest in decision-making processes. To achieve these results, the first step of the project aimed at empowering citizens, which meant giving them the tools and the knowledge to develop their own proposals on the rules that govern daily life, with the ultimate goal of presenting initiatives to municipalities (and potentially later to the national/EU level). This project can be seen as a small scale "laboratory" for the development of a proposal under the European Citizens' Initiative (which allows one million EU citizens to participate directly in the development of EU policies, by calling on the European Commission to make a legislative proposal), and had by September 2016 involved 6 230 direct and 9 160 indirect participants. This project reflects the ability of the EfCP effectively to support improvement to the civic and democratic participation at all levels (but especially at the EU level where the rate of participation is the lowest) by explaining how the policy-making process works. By bringing topics that matters to the citizens to the politicians, the project aims to include the citizen in the process and promote a feeling of belonging.

The positive effects of participation in EfCP-funded activities were also shared in the public consultation by those who have been involved in the EfCP (see Figure 14). Although this question received a relatively **small number of replies**, it still provides some indication of the impressions of participants in EfCP-funded activities on the influence of their participation on their perception of Europe and feeling European. The data collected in the public consultation shows that, In particular, the result of participation in the EfCP that was felt most strongly by participants was that they wanted to become more engaged with civic society following their involvement (58%). It is also noteworthy that a large proportion of the respondents to the public consultation who had participated in EfCP activities noted positive effects of their participation on their knowledge of Europe.

Figure 14: Effects of participation in EfCP-funded activities according to the public consultation (n=40)
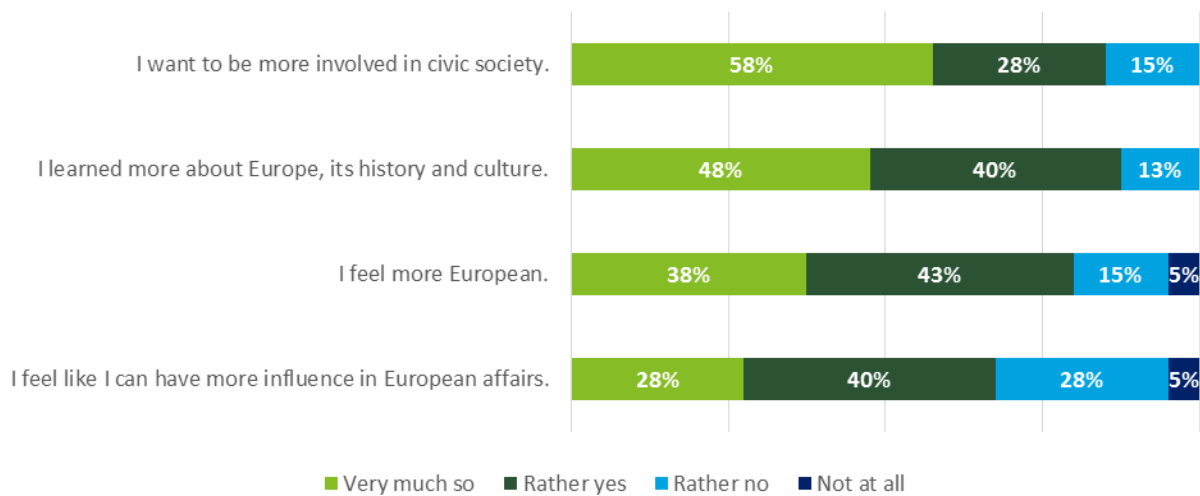
Source: EfCP public consultation

The feeling that the EfCP effectively addresses its objectives was also echoed by respondents[83] to our web-based survey, as shown in the figure below.

Figure 15: EfCP's effectiveness in reaching its objectives (n=80)
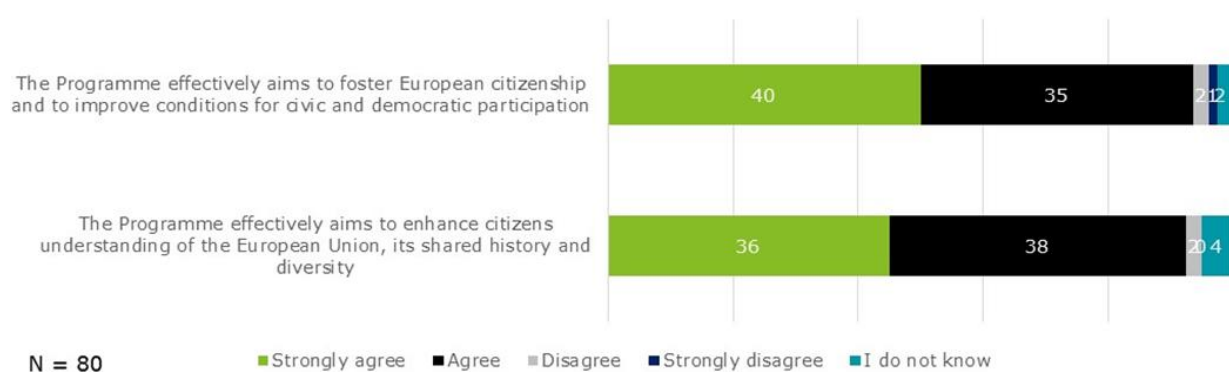
Source: Web-based survey to Programme beneficiaries and unsuccessful applicants

While the respondents to the web-based survey and some of those who took part in the public consultation are programme beneficiaries, and only five were unsuccessful applicants, and thus there is a risk of positive bias, **NCPs were also adamant that the EfCP makes a contribution to both the enhancement of civic participation and raising awareness on the shared history and values of the EU**. They believed they could perceive such effects because of their close engagement with grass-roots civil society in the Member States. However, they agreed that this was not a quantifiable contribution and that it would be difficult to establish a causal link with the EfCP in practice.

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[83] Programme's beneficiaries and non-successful applicants.

As noted above the 2011 Impact Assessment sets out three long term targets and milestones to evidence the achievement of the Programme's general objectives based on quantity and quality of the initiative. Below we discuss the performance of the EfCP in relation to each.

- **Enhanced capacity of civil society to influence the European project.** The preceding paragraphs have illustrated the potential contribution of the EfCP in the attainment of this long-term target, for instance through Civil Society projects that encourage the citizens' participation in the community and interest in decision-making processes. This is the only one of the three targets and milestones where there is strong evidence that the Programme is on track. Special factors have influenced the ability to achieve the others.

- **Contributions to the European Years** in the form of intellectual input or activities to link the Years with the local and regional realities. The European Year 2014 was focussed on citizens and continued some of the activities of the European Year of Citizens 2013, with a focus on the European elections[84]. The EfCP 2014-2020 was established from 1 January 2014, but its Regulation was only adopted on 14 April 2014 which means that its contribution to the European Year could only have been limited (the predecessor Programme had provided additional budget to the European Year of Citizens in 2013). There is no evidence of the EfCP contributing to the European Year for Development in 2015, although it is briefly mentioned in the Annual Work Programme for 2015 as a potential topic under the priority of the debate on the future of Europe (*How can the European Union assume a leading role in preserving peace, developing and consolidating democracy and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in the world, notably in the context of the European Year of Development 2015?*). Unlike past practice, and the likely assumption of the Impact Assessment, there were no European Years in 2016 or 2017. The Coherence section of the present evaluation outlines the potential for synergies between the EfCP and the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018.

- **Contributions to political platforms in the run-up to European elections 2014 and 2019**. Although in 2014 applicants were encouraged to develop projects in line with the annual priority for Strand 2 built around the elections to the European Parliament and citizens' participation in the democratic life of the EU, it is unlikely that any of the projects would have been in place by the time the elections were held in June 2014. The debate on the future of Europe is a permanent priority of Strand 2 and also can contribute to greater interest in European issues such as the European elections.

> The extent to which the activities undertaken in the framework of the EfCP effectively contributed to the Programme's general objectives was assessed on the basis of the impact

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[84] For more information and details on the activities under this European Year, please visit http://europa.eu/citizens-2013/en/home.

indicators featured in the 2011 Impact Assessment, in the absence of suitable indicators to assess performance in the EfCP Regulation.

While no targets were set for the number of the initiatives in relation to the Programme's general objectives in the 2011 Impact Assessment, the number of projects funded, as well as the number of direct and indirect participants between 2014 and 2016, when taken together with the evidence of the quality of the initiatives, suggests that the programme has contributed to the achievement of the general objectives.

Participation in EfCP-funded activities encourages further involvement in democratic and civic participation among direct and indirect project participants. It is plausible that the activities undertaken have contributed to the enhancement of civic participation and the overall debate on the past, present and future of the EU.

Thus activities funded through the EfCP have contributed effectively to the Programme's general objectives of enhancing citizens' understanding of the Union, its shared history and diversity, as well as fostering European citizenship and improving conditions for civic and democratic participation at Union level.

4.2.2. Effectiveness of the activities in contributing to the Programme's specific objectives

The specific objectives of EfCP are outlined in Article 2 of the Regulation establishing the Programme: "The Programme shall have the following specific objectives which shall be implemented through actions at transnational level or with a European dimension:

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

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

This section presents our findings in relation to the following evaluation questions:

- *To what extent have the activities undertaken in the framework of the EfCP been effective in contributing to the Programme's specific objectives?*
- *Does participation in the programme appear satisfactory in terms of the balance between new organisations and those which have received support previously?*

By way of background, two sources of information on impact and performance indicators were used in the development of the Analytical Framework underpinning the evaluation – the Impact Assessment which accompanied the proposal for the Regulation establishing the EfCP for 2014-2020[55] and the Regulation itself[1]. As already explained in Section 3.2 the

indicators outlined in each document are not directly compatible and do not correspond exactly. However, the Study Team considered that they were both useful in the assessment of the performance of the EfCP 2014 – 2020 in relation to its objectives.

While the 2011 Impact Assessment was "superseded" by the Regulation, it contained long term and medium term targets which were helpful to gauge impact. The Regulation establishing the Programme contained performance-related indicators, some of which matched the impact indicators outlined in the Impact Assessment. The monitoring data collected by EACEA on the basis of the Regulation contained baselines and milestones for 2017 and 2020. Thus, the Analytical Framework used a combination of the two types of indicators, as well as referred to long term / medium term targets (Impact Assessment) and 2017-2020 targets (Regulation). This is reflected in the following sections presenting our analysis on the effectiveness of the EfCP in the attainment of its specific objectives.

Specific Objective (a) (i.e. Strand 1, European Remembrance)

The activities funded by the EfCP that are the most relevant for the attainment of this specific objective are the Action and Operating Grants under the Programme's Strand 1. Remembrance covers activities on defining moments and reference points in recent European history to foster common European memory and culture of remembrance.

The Impact Assessment accompanying the proposal for the Regulation establishing the EfCP for 2014-2020[55] outlined targets for Programme results that would serve as basis in the assessment of the effectiveness of Programme activities to contribute to the attainment of this specific objective.

Table 12: 2011 Impact Assessment impact indicators / targets and achievements to date for Strand 1

2011 Impact Assessment impact indicators / targets	Achievements to date	Comments
> **The number of projects funded under Strand 1 to increase by at least 80%.**	> Increase of 27% in the number of Strand 1 projects between 2013 and 2016.	The target was not achieved, but the overall programme budget was decreased in the new programming period.
> **Minimum 15% of first-time beneficiaries funded under Strand 1 each year**	> **New beneficiaries** in Strand 1 in 2016 were 58%.	The target was exceeded in 2016.

Source: 2011 Impact Assessment and Programme monitoring data[85]

As shown in Table 12 , the key target relevant for Strand 1 was to increase the **number of projects funded under the Remembrance strand** by 80%, but in the context of anticipation of a slightly larger budget and a strengthening of Remembrance. The baseline was 31 projects funded in 2013 and the number rose to 38 in 2016, an increase of 27%. Assuming that the

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[85] Internal data

same progress is made in the second half of the programme, the target is not expected to be achieved.

The analysis of monitoring data shows that the number of first-time beneficiaries of Strand 1 in 2016 was 58%.[86] The key target of **at least 15% new entrants** to Strand 1 per year referenced in the 2011 Impact Assessment was comfortably exceeded at mid-term.

The table below summarises the actual performance of the EfCP to date against the indicators set out in the Regulation establishing the Programme. The targets for all five performance-related indicators have been exceeded in 2016 and the Programme is on track to reach the targets outlined for 2020.

Table 13: EfCP 2014 – 2020 Regulation performance indicators / targets and achievements to date for Strand 1

EfCP 2014 – 2020 Regulation indicators	Baseline 2013	Achievements to date	Comments	Target 2020
> Indicator 1: the number of participants who are directly involved	100 000	> Number of direct participants has remained stable at 100 000 between 2014 and 2016.	The target of at least 100 000 direct participants in Strand 1 for 2017 has been achieved.	100 000
> Indicator 2: the number of persons indirectly reached by the Programme	150 000	> Number of indirect participants has consistently increased to reach 190 000 in 2016.	The target for 2017 was to reach 180 000 indirect participants in Strand 1 (or an increase of 20%). The target was already exceeded in 2015.	35% increase in the number of indirect participants to Strand 1 (202 500)
> Indicator 3: the number of projects	31	> There were 38 projects funded under Strand 1 in 2016.	The target for 2017 is to fund at least 35 projects under the Programme's Strand 1. The target was exceeded in 2016.	36
> Indicator 4: the quality of the project applications and the degree to which the results of selected projects can be further used / transferred	Lowest score obtained by a retained project: 80/100	> The lowest score obtained by a project funded under Strand 1 was 82.5/100 in 2016.	The target for 2017 is to fund projects under Strand 1 that have obtained at least 81.6/100. This target was exceeded in 2016.	Lowest score obtained by a project funded under Strand 1 is 83,2

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[86] No data on the first-time beneficiaries in 2014 and 2015 was provided.

EfCP 2014 – 2020 Regulation indicators	Baseline 2013	Achievements to date	Comments	Target 2020
> **Indicator 5: percentage of first-time applicants**	40%	> The first-time applicants in Strand 1 were 50% of total applicants in 2016.	The target for 2017 attract at least 40% new applicants to the Programme was exceeded in 2016.	Between 35 and 45% first-time applicants per year.

Source: Programme monitoring data[87]

In addition, since the inception of the new programming period, the EfCP has provided structural support to six organisations from Strand 1 through **multi-annual Operating Grants** covering the years 2014-2017. These Operating Grant beneficiaries are organisations with European outreach which can make a tangible contribution to the objectives of the Programme. This contribution differs from the Action Grants, insofar as it funds their permanent, usual and regular activities, rather than a specific project.

Our interviews with Operating Grant beneficiaries from Strand 1 highlighted their contribution to raising awareness about European remembrance, including through the development of activities linking remembrance with civic participation and democracy in the broadest sense. The structural support received through the EfCP enables these organisations to reach significant numbers of citizens and they have the potential to act as multipliers for the Programme's impacts, as they can relay the messages to their own target audiences and stakeholders. For instance, the European Observatory on Memories of the University of Barcelona's Solidarity Foundation[88] currently benefiting from an Operating Grant includes more than 30 partners in 15 countries. The work of the organisation focuses on the public use of memories and the right of European citizens to remember.

However, there are no indicators or targets in the 2011 Impact Assessment or the Regulation establishing the 2014–2020 Programme on the Operating Grants, thus we cannot assess any of this performance against a baseline or set of indicators. Operating Grant beneficiary organisations are nevertheless included in the total number of beneficiaries and their activities contribute to the total number of people reached by the Programme.

Perceptions of impact

The qualitative data for responding to this question comes primarily from **stakeholder perceptions of the value of their participation in EfCP activities**, namely the Public Consultation and the case studies.

As shown in the Figure on the Effects of participation in EfCP-funded activities according to the public consultation (Figure 14 in the preceding section), a significant proportion of respondents who had participated in EfCP-funded activities felt that they had learned more about Europe, its history and culture following their participation. This impression was echoed by the beneficiaries who participated in the web-based survey, as shown in Figure 16 below.

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[87] Internal data
[88] For more information, see http://europeanmemories.net/.

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

Figure 16: Beneficiaries' opinions on impacts of their funded projects in the context of Remembrance (n=75)
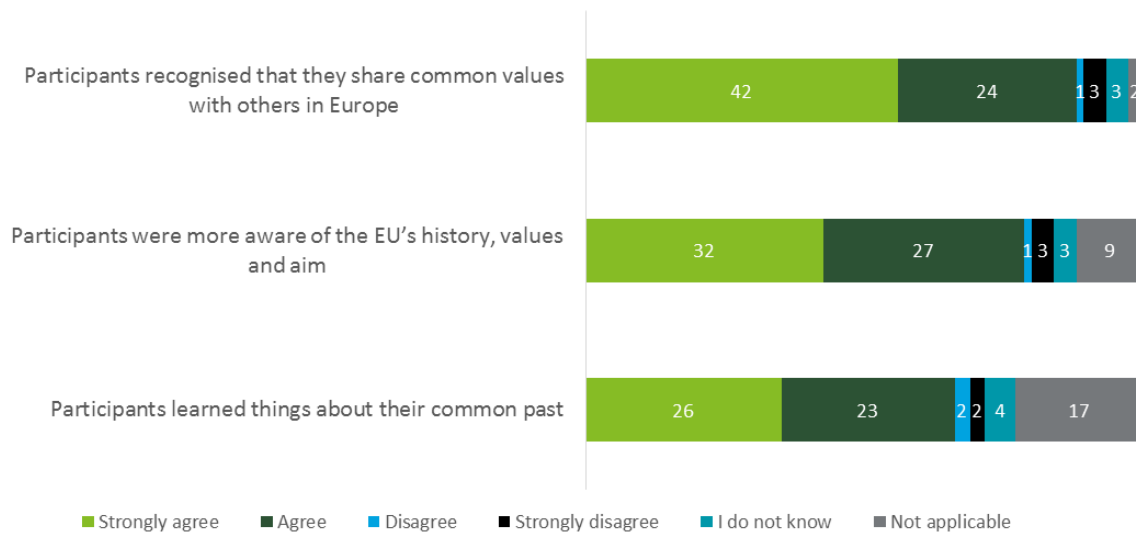
Source: Web-based survey of beneficiaries

A review of the seven case studies on Strand 1 projects indicated that all of them had achieved results in enhancing the participants' awareness of the Union's shared history, values and aim.

Our analysis also suggested that the participants in Strand 1 projects had been given the possibility to learn things about their common past and that as a result, they recognised that they share common values with citizens from other Member States. Assessing whether these projects had contributed to lasting changes in participants' attitudes and behaviours to the EU, its history, values and culture is less straightforward, but the evidence from the review did indicate that most projects had the potential to contribute to these aims of the EfCP.

The programme in practice - 2

An Irish remembrance project titled *Women, War and Peace,* coordinated by Smashing Times Theatre Company, was funded in 2015 and focussed on the role of women in World War II outlining atypical stories e.g. of the heroic nurse, doctor or in combat. By researching and remembering the history of women in World War II, the project also brought into focus the human rights, gender equality and peace that EU citizens enjoy today.

A project from 2016 (*In RETROSPECT*, coordinated by Inter Alia) aimed at exploring core European values through activities of remembrance and collective reflection, by linking the memories of and attitudes towards the Yugoslav wars in former Yugoslavia with those from outside (participants from Belgium, Germany and Greece) but also discussed the EU's role in this conflict. This project also sought to raise awareness of distorted memories and false

perceptions of both sides. The project is still ongoing and most of the results are yet to be produced, but it seems reasonable to expect that getting to know many different perspectives on the Yugoslav wars will have a certain impact on the participants in the events.

Specific Objective (b) (i.e. Strand 2, EU Citizenship and participation)

This specific objective is addressed by the activities funded under Strand 2, namely Action and Operating Grants encouraging democratic engagement and civic participation.

The Impact Assessment accompanying the proposal for the Regulation establishing the EfCP for 2014-2020[55] outlined targets that would serve as basis in the assessment of the effectiveness of Programme activities to contribute to the attainment of this specific objective.

Table 14: 2011 Impact Assessment indicators / targets and achievements to date for Strand 2

2011 Impact Assessment Indicators / Targets	Achievements to date	Comments
> The number of persons directly reached by the Programme is at least 600 000 per year.	> At least 1 000 000 persons per year have been directly involved in Strand 2 of the programme since 2013.	Target is comfortably exceeded at medium term.
> The number of persons indirectly reached by the Programme is at least 5 million since 2013.	> To date, almost 3.5 million persons have been indirectly reached by the Programme.	By medium term, the target has not been achieved, but the Programme seems to be fairly successful in engaging a non-negligible number of indirect participants.
> The number of participating organisations is at least 2 000 per year since 2013.	> In 2016, 1 550 organisations participated in the Programme.	By medium term, the target has not been achieved, but the numbers are encouraging. It should also be noted that these figures are likely to be affected by the reduction of the Programme's budget in 2014.
> The percentage of first-time beneficiaries is at least 15%.	> The **new beneficiaries** in Strand 2 in 2016 were: Town-Twinning: 73% Networks of Towns: 90% Civil society projects: 84%	By medium term, the target has been exceeded by a large amount.
> At least one project has been funded per country.	> There are 33 participating countries (28 Member States and 5 other participating countries). In 2016, organisations from 27 countries were selected as lead	While the 2011 Impact Assessment target of one funded project per country had not been reached as of 2016, it should be noted that the target for 2020

2011 Impact Assessment Indicators / Targets	Achievements to date	Comments
	partner and organisations from 28 as co-partner. In 2016, there were 25 Member States with appropriate national coverage.[89]	referenced in the monitoring document from EACEA has been revised to organisations from 28 countries selected as lead or co-partners. This means that the future target would be achieved.

Source: 2011 Impact Assessment and Programme monitoring data[90]

As shown in Table 14, our analysis of monitoring data provided by EACEA shows that the **number of participants directly involved** in activities under Strand 2 contributing to the attainment of this objective has been at least 1 m per year since 2013, thereby exceeding the target of 600 000 per year set out in the 2011 Impact Assessment[55].

To date, the **number of persons indirectly reached** over the three first years of the EfCP (almost 3.5 million) falls short meeting the target of 5 million expected to be reached by the medium term.

The **number of organisations** which have been involved so far under Strand 2 was 1 550 for 2016, which is below the anticipated 2 000 per year. The Programme appears to be very successful in **stimulating the participation of newcomers** as over one in two applicants in 2016 were applying to EfCP for the first time.

The Programme is over-achieving the target of 15% of new beneficiaries in 2016 by a very large margin according to the monitoring data provided by EACEA.

The monitoring data also indicates an **increase in multi-partner partnerships** and networks since 2013.

The target on geographical coverage in the 2011 Impact Assessment[55] is minimalist, i.e. at least one project per country. This target has not been achieved, but only because one country had no project in 2016. A review of the Reports on the Programme activities from 2014 to 2016 provided by DG HOME confirms a **balanced geographical spread** of participation in the Programme. The monitoring data for 2016 shows that organisations selected respectively as lead or co-partner originated from 27 and 28 countries (out of 33 eligible countries). However, the geographical balance in Town-Twinning could be improved as the Report of Annual Activities for 2015 indicates that over 50% of selected projects came from only four Member States as coordinators. This trend is also confirmed in the Report of Annual Activities for 2016, where the same Member States (Germany, Hungary, Italy and Slovakia) accounted for more than half the Town-Twinning projects selected (for the country of the Co-ordinator).

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[89] The national coverage is calculated on the basis of the percentage of projects submitted (or selected) by Member State as a lead partner (or co-partner) against the percentage of its population in the total population of the EU.

[90] Internal data

Table 15 presents the findings on the Programme's achievements to date against the performance-related indicators set out in the Regulation establishing the Programme for Specific Objective 2 on democratic participation. The EfCP has successfully reached the number of direct participants anticipated for 2017. It is currently slightly underperforming in relation to indirect participation, but it is possible that the Programme will achieve the target by the end of 2017. The Programme has successfully involved a large number of organisations and is over-performing in relation to this target. The EfCP's Strand 2 appears attractive to newcomers, as more than half of the applicants in 2016 were applying for the first time.

The analysis of monitoring data also uncovered that the Programme has been successful in attracting a variety of stakeholders and that the geographical coverage of the activities appears satisfactory. On the other hand, the number of Networks of towns which have been supported by the Programme has decreased since 2013 and is falling short of achieving the 2017 targets. The Programme is underachieving in fostering policy initiatives following-up on activities supported by the Programme at the local or European level, as it needs to support at least two by the end of 2017 to reach the mid-term target.

Table 15: EfCP 2014 – 2020 Regulation performance indicators / targets and achievements to date for Strand 2

EfCP 2014 – 2020 Regulation performance indicators	Baseline 2013	Achievements at the end of 2016	Comments	Target 2020
> Indicator 1: the number of participants who are directly involved	1 000 000	> Number of direct participants has remained stable at 1 000 000 between 2014 and 2016.	The target of at least 1 000 000 direct participants in Strand 2 for 2017 has been achieved.	1 200 000 direct participants in Strand 2
> Indicator 2: the number of persons indirectly reached by the Programme	1 000 000	> Number of indirect participants has been stable at 1 100 000 between 2014 and 2016.	The target for 2017 was to reach 1 200 000 indirect participants in Strand 2 (or an increase of 20%). Participation in 2016 suggests that the target could be reached in 2017.	35% increase in the number of indirect participants to Strand 2 (1 350 000)

EfCP 2014 – 2020 Regulation performance indicators	Baseline 2013	Achievements at the end of 2016	Comments	Target 2020
> Indicator 3: the number of participating organisations	1 000	> The number of participating organisations in Strand 2 has consistently increased between 2014 and 2016, to reach 1 550.	The target for 2017 was that at least 1 400 organisations participate in the Programme's Strand 2. The target was exceeded in 2016.	1 700
> Indicator 5: the quality of the project applications	Lowest score obtained by a retained project: 71 / 100	> The lowest score obtained by a project funded under Strand 2 was 73/100 in 2016.	The target for 2017 is to fund projects under Strand 2 that have obtained at least 72.4/100. This target was exceeded in 2016.	Lowest score obtained by a project funded under Strand 2 is 73,9
> Indicator 6: percentage of first-time applicants	40%	> The first-time applicants in Strand 2 were 53% of total applicants in 2016.	The target for 2017 to attract at least 40% new applicants to the Programme was exceeded in 2016.	-5%<40%<+5
> Indicator 7: number of transnational partnerships including different types of stakeholders	1,3	> The number of transnational partnerships including different types of stakeholders was 1.8 in 2016.	The target for 2017 is that there are at least 2 types of stakeholders in transnational partnerships. The Programme could achieve the target in 2017.	At least 2 types of stakeholders.
> Indicator 8: number of Networks of towns	41	> The number of Networks of towns was 30 in 2016 and has been decreasing since 2014.	The target for 2017 is to fund 49 Networks of towns under EfCP. The Programme is falling behind in the achievement of this target.	56

EfCP 2014 – 2020 Regulation performance indicators	Baseline 2013	Achievements at the end of 2016	Comments	Target 2020
> Indicator 9: the number and quality of policy initiatives following-up on activities supported by the Programme at the local or European level	0	> As of 2016, there is no indication of policy initiatives following-up on activities supported by the Programme at the local or European level.	The target for 2017 is 2 follow-up policy initiatives at local of European level. According to the EfCP management, the monitoring was not possible for this indicator, thus it is unclear if the target was achieved or not. .	2
> Indicator 10: the geographical coverage of the activities: **(i) the comparison between the percentage of projects submitted by one Member State as a lead partner and the percentage of its population in the total population of the Union** **(ii) the comparison between the percentage of projects selected per Member State as a lead partner and the percentage of its population in the total population of the Union** **(iii) the comparison between the percentage of projects submitted by one Member State as a lead partner or co- partner and the percentage of its population in the total population of the Union** **(iv) the comparison between the percentage of projects selected per Member State as a lead partner or co-partner and the percentage of its population in the total population of the Union.**	Number of Member States with appropriate national coverage (NC)[91]: (i) submitting as lead partner (13) (ii) selected as a lead partner (12) (iii) submitting as lead partner or co-partner (18) (iv) selected as a lead partner or co-partner (15)	> As of 2016, the number of Member States with appropriate national coverage (NC) is the following: (i) submitting as lead partner (27) (ii) selected as a lead partner (27) (iii) submitting as lead partner or co-partner (28) (iv) selected as a lead partner or co-partner (25)	The targets for 2017 have been achieved in 2016: (i) submitting as lead partner (13) (ii) selected as a lead partner (26) (iii) submitting as lead partner or co-partner (26) (iv) selected as a lead partner or co-partner (26)	(i) submitting as lead partner (25) (ii) selected as a lead partner (28) (iii) submitting as lead partner or co-partner (28) (iv) selected as a lead partner or co-partner (28)

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

Perceptions of impact

This quantitative data is complemented by qualitative information (collected during the various consultation exercises with stakeholders) on **the experience of participants in EfCP activities in Strand 2.**

As shown in the Figure on the Effects of participation in EfCP-funded activities according to the public consultation (Figure 14 in the preceding section), members of the general public who had participated in EfCP-funded activities were overwhelmingly positive so that, following their participation in the EfCP, they want to be more involved in civil society. This sentiment was echoed in the majority of case studies of projects funded under Strand 2 in particular the five Civil Society Projects reviewed.

The programme in practice - 3

The assessment of 13 case studies assessed under Strand 2 indicated that the main impacts on participants came in the contribution of the EfCP to improving the conditions for civic and democratic participation at Union level and encouraging the participation of citizens at Union level.

For instance, a Civil Society project (*The citizens are speaking*, coordinated by the Cross Culture International Foundation) sought to further integration and refugee policy through volunteering activities with third country nationals and conferences to discuss policy. The desired impact was to change (negative) attitudes towards immigrants (e.g. xenophobia) and promote intercultural engagement, as well as encouraging policy makers to spearhead changes in this area.

An example of how the EfCP can encourage the democratic and civic participation of citizens at Union level is in a Network of Towns project reviewed for the evaluation, meant to build lasting relationships for cooperation and exchange of good practices regarding zero waste within the network of European municipalities and civil society groups (called *Town to Town, People to People – Building a European Culture of Zero Waste* and coordinated by Stichting Zero Waste Europe). The project sought to support the elaboration, implementation, and monitoring of European waste and resource efficiency policies, as well as assist the European Commission to improve the monitoring and implementation of local waste policies. The effort of disseminating good practices on waste through the Project at the European level translated into a request from the Institute for Prospective Technological Studies of the European Commission Joint Research Centre (JRC-IPTS) of the European Commission to take part in the technical working group on best environmental practices for waste management, aiming at producing a reference document on best practices.

Stakeholder views on the effectiveness of EfCP activities in relation to the Specific Objectives

NCP focus group participants had a more subtle position on the effectiveness of the Programme in attaining both specific objectives. Nevertheless, while they struggled to provide specific examples on the contribution of the EfCP to the achievement of these aims, their general impression was that the programme has a certain impact which is difficult to quantify but is nevertheless perceptible at the local level and within the local communities involved. An example is the Civil Society Project *YesEuropa: young volunteers changing Europe*, coordinated by the organisation Building Bridges, aimed at raising awareness among young people, teachers and youth workers from rural areas and disadvantaged contexts about the benefits of participating in volunteering programmes in order to become active citizens. This project succeeded in informing a number of young rural people about the EU and volunteering opportunities.

While NCPs could not directly attribute an enhancement in civic engagement to EfCP projects carried out in their Member State, they felt that **the overall discussion on democratic and civic participation has been furthered** thanks to the EfCP.

At mid-term, the EfCP is performing well with regards to the attainment of its specific objectives based on the impact indicators in the Impact Assessment, the performance-related indicators in the EfCP Regulation and the perceptions of stakeholders. This is true of both Strands.

Not all targets on numbers of beneficiaries or participants reached have yet been attained, but the numbers are significant and targets appear to be within reach. The data on first-time beneficiaries suggest that the Programme is successfully reaching out to new audiences both by attracting new beneficiaries and larger, more transnational partnerships. While the geographic balance is good overall, Town-Twinning is an exception, with four countries dominating the selection.

The qualitative data is supported by the quantitative evidence, and together they support the premise that the EfCP has successfully contributed to the achievement of its specific objectives.

4.2.3. Effectiveness of Horizontal Action activities in providing analysis, dissemination and use of project results

The Horizontal Action of the EfCP was introduced when the Programme was restructured in 2014, in order to address the need for an **effective strategy for identifying and disseminating best practices and the capitalisation of results** highlighted in the 2011 Impact Assessment[55].

This section presents our findings in relation to the following evaluation question:

- *To what extent have the activities under the horizontal aspect of the Programme been effective in providing analysis, dissemination and use of project results?*

The main activity included in the Horizontal Action is the funding of information structures in Member States and participating countries—the **Europe for Citizens NCPs**. These provide advice to applicants, support for partner search and disseminate information on the Programme in the broadest sense. Another activity is the financial contribution to institutional communication about the political priorities of the Union (as far as they are related to the general objectives of the Regulation). This has been financed only once in 2014 for an amount of 250 000 EUR. In the reviewed period, the Horizontal Action has also supported a variety of events relevant to the two Programme Strands, as well as the development and maintenance of dissemination tools such as a website / Citizenship Portal, a platform for project results and a newsletter.

The **expected result** under the Horizontal Action is an increase in learning from experience, a boost of transferability of results and, as a consequence, increased lasting effects of the activities supported. The expectation is that there could be an increased impact of communication on the topic of EU citizenship, thus fostering a better understanding of the EU by citizens and an enhanced image of the EU institutions and their activities with measurable positive trends in public perception.

The analysis of the annual reports on the Programme from 2014 to 2016 provided an **overview of the activities funded** to date through the Horizontal Action, as presented below:

Table 16: Breakdown of activities in the Horizontal Action, 2014 - 2016

Activities	2014	2015	2016
NCPs funded	25	27	29
Events	- Holocaust Remembrance Day 2014 – 27 January 2014 – Brussels - European Citizens' Forum 2014 – Brussels, 28 January 2014 - European Remembrance Networking	- Holocaust Remembrance Day 2015 – 27 January 2015 – Brussels - European Remembrance Networking Meeting - Tallinn, 4-6 April	- Holocaust Remembrance Day 2016 – 27 January 2015 – Brussels - European Conference "European Citizenship in Challenging Times", 31 May – 1 June 2017 - Barcelona - Sixth Edition of the European

Activities	2014	2015	2016
	Meeting,- Prague, 9-11 April 2014 - Conference "Citizens in my city – Citizens in Europe". - Rome, 15-16 December 2014		Remembrance Networking Meeting, - Barcelona - Civil dialogue meeting, - Barcelona
Other	- EU Citizenship Portal, visited 155,224 times in 2014. - E-mapping project (to better promote the projects selected within the EfCP and their results). - Ex-post evaluation of the EfCP 2007-2013.	- Website, visited 107,733 times in 2015 - E-mapping project moved forward: an online database of projects funded under the Europe for Citizens programme was developed	- Co-funding of the dissemination platform/database of Europe for Citizens projects[92]. - Three editions of the Europe for Citizens Newsletter, launched in January 2016. - Mid-term evaluation of the Europe for Citizens Programme 2014-2020
Support to project selection (external experts to evaluate proposals)			

Source: Reports on Annual Activities, 2014 to 2016

We reviewed the reports on annual activities of the EfCP, as well as relevant documentation on individual events supported through the Horizontal Action between 2014 and the end of 2016, in order to gain additional insights on the content and the quality of these activities. This informed our judgement as to whether these activities effectively contribute to the expected result of the Horizontal Action.

The organisation of an annual Holocaust Remembrance Day throughout the reviewed period[93], including (among others) organisations active in the area of European remembrance, NCPs and Commission staff, is a commendable initiative which is conducive to increasing the effects of the Programme's Strand 1 by bringing together key stakeholders under the aegis of the Commission. This recurring commemoration presents an interesting opportunity (which DG HOME has taken advantage of) to further disseminate the Programme's message on remembrance. The evaluation team attended the Holocaust Remembrance Day on 27 January 2016, where more or less 50 participants were present, EU officials and CDG members attending upon invitation. Despite stressing the importance of involving their generation, there were no young people attending the event, partly explained by the fact that the event (taking place in the Commission's Berlaymont building) was not open to everyone for security reasons.

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[92] This refers to the results programme known as VALOR, which disseminates the results of Erasmus+ and Creative Europe projects. The Europe for Citizens Programme results use the same platform with an independent interface.

[93] We understand that this event was also organised during the EfCP's 2007 – 2013 programming period.

Other events potentially increasing the effects of remembrance activities are the yearly European Remembrance Networking Meetings, taking place since 2010. In 2014, the fourth edition attracted more than 200 people active in the field of history, memory and remembrance, representing over 170 organisations from 30 different countries. Beyond bringing together key stakeholders and potentially fostering the development of a pan-European remembrance network, these events also enhance the dialogue on the topics present in the EfCP priorities. This type of activity has the potential to raise the overall profile of the Programme, but also positions the European Commission as a front runner in remembrance activities across the EU.

The Horizontal Action has also supported events in the context of Strand 2. In 2014, a conference titled *Citizens in my city – Citizens in Europe* was organised, bringing together stakeholders from civil society (members of the Civil Dialogue Group) and regional / local authorities (from the Council of European Municipalities and Regions), thus providing an opportunity to enhance the synergies between the two target groups. By putting the emphasis on the town twinning movement as a driver for the fostering of European citizenship at the local level, this event potentially contributed to the development of linkages between Programme activities and the overall transferability of results.

To assess the work of the NCPs, we first analysed the **feedback from unsuccessful applicants** and from beneficiaries on the NCP's services obtained through the web-based survey. The results from our web-based survey indicates that NCPs are mostly used for requesting information, as shown in Figure 17. Around half the respondents had not used the NCP for the review of their application or for partner search. Among the reasons for not using the services, survey respondents noted that the NCP network had not been advertised enough or that they thought they did not need any help. Beneficiary respondents to our web-based survey who reported using the service were positive about the provision of information and clarifications by the NCPs, as shown in Figure 17, which suggests that their information dissemination role is positively perceived by the users of their services.

Beneficiaries who used their services find the **NCPs useful**, as shown in the figure below.

Figure 17: Web-based survey respondents' satisfaction with NCP services (n=80)[94]
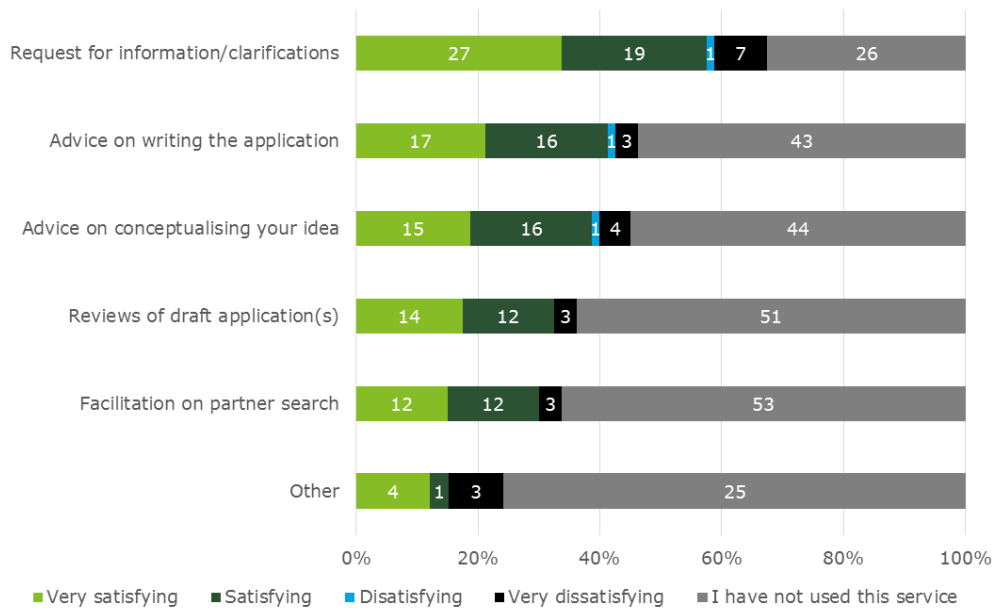
Source: Web-based survey to beneficiaries and unsuccessful applicants

A review of programme documentation confirms the relevance and effectiveness of NCPs as institutional actors promoting the programme, supporting potential applicants and contributing to the creating of links with grass-roots CSOs in the Member States.

The NCPs appeared generally satisfied with their role in the Programme, but noted possible areas for improvement. The overall impression was that there is relevant knowledge and experience among NCPs which is not currently mobilised, but could add value to the EfCP. Furthermore, concerns were raised on the persistence of the (long-standing) issue on the responsibility to provide **feedback to unsuccessful applicants**. Our understanding is that this is currently done by EACEA in fairly concise form, while some applicants would prefer to see more detail on the reasons for the rejection of their project. This also affects NCPs, insofar it makes it difficult for them to advise potential applicants and develop best practices.

Feedback to unsuccessful applicants is an issue also raised in previous studies. The ex-post evaluation of the EfCP 2007-2013 highlighted the difficulty in obtaining feedback[63]. It was also noted in the study carried out by Coffey for the European Parliament[95] in 2016, which recommended redefining the process for the communication of results to applicants, for instance by communicating the results to the NCPs prior to or at the same time as making them public. It was also suggested that, as part of the process, NCPs be given access to applicants' files so that they are able to give better feedback to applicants. This issue was also highlighted by the European Parliament in its Resolution from March 2017 on the implementation of the EfCP Regulation, which stated "that rejected applications should be

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responded to satisfactorily, indicating the reasons for the rejection, especially when the entity that lodged an application asks for an explanation" and suggested "considering, where possible, the identification of priority issues from similar rejected applications".[96]

The Civil Dialogue Group (CDG) participants expressed dissatisfaction with their meetings organised as part of the Horizontal Action, noting that they consisted mostly of networking amongst the group and sessions where only a one-sided dialogue takes place, without much bilateral engagement (between the Commission and the group). The CDG members would prefer an approach enabling open and structured dialogue. They also expressed an interest in having a dialogue with policy makers and other (national) stakeholders.

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

On the topic of **communication and dissemination of results** there was consensus among NCPs that the relevant organisations and potential applicants are well aware of the existence of the Programme based on the joint activities on communication from all the institutional actors involved. However, NCPs and CDG member workshop participants felt that the communication activities of DG HOME and EACEA were not sufficient, although it appears that there is an adequate level of awareness. Criticism was levelled at the websites promoting the EfCP for lacking structure, not being sufficiently interactive and not always updated in a timely fashion. In particular, it was noted that currently, communication activities do not focus enough on promoting the results of the Programme and the benefits it offers for regular citizens (networking, meeting different cultures and contexts).

Our analysis shows that **the online platform / database of Europe for Citizens projects**[97] (introduced in 2015) elicits mixed reactions from stakeholders. The online database was designed to promote the exchange of good practice and synergies between EU funding programmes in the area of education, culture and citizenship, to give more visibility to the projects which have received grants, and to enable organisations to identify potential partners for future projects. Participants in our NCP focus groups were in agreement that the online database for project results is an excellent initiative for the dissemination of Programme results, but its usefulness is not yet maximised because of its interface and content. This sentiment was shared by the CDG member workshop attendees who highlighted that the tool is helpful, but not necessarily user-friendly[98].

The NCPs participating in the focus group perceived the introduction of the **EfCP newsletter**, which has been circulated to them by DG HOME since January 2016. While some deplored the lack of regular newsletter updates, most of the NCPs reported using the newsletter to

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[96] Conclusions (21); European Parliament Resolution on the implementation of the EfCP Regulation, op.cit.
[97] Available at http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/europe-for-citizens/projects/.
[98] We note that the ability to make improvements to user-friendliness is dependent on the overall evolution of the VALOR platform and the Programme is not in the driving seat on this. We are aware that delays in the migration from Documentum to Drupal have, for example, held up the ability to make improvements to the Search function and the addition of new functionalities across the underlying platform.

draw out potential news stories for their NCP website, project ideas and to stay abreast of European citizenship news. This suggests that the latest horizontal initiative of DG HOME has good dissemination potential, as the newsletter disseminates information on the programme, which is then relayed by the NCPs acting as multipliers.

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

> The effectiveness of the Horizontal Action activities in providing analysis, dissemination and use of project results is satisfactory, but not yet maximised.
>
> Dissemination activities (high-profile events, development of an online database for project results, maintenance of a programme website) contribute to raising awareness about the programme, but there is scope for a more strategic approach, as highlighted in the study carried out by Coffey for the European Parliament[99], which suggested upgrading the overall approach to communication of the EfCP at central and local level. Despite the satisfaction of stakeholders with the majority of activities funded through the Horizontal Action, the potential of activities has yet to be fully exploited.
>
> The NCPs have been effective in their role as information structures and are helpful in providing assistance to potential applicants to the EfCP,[100] although the perception of the level of effectiveness appears to vary depending on the stakeholders consulted. There is room for more dialogue between the Commission/EACEA and both the NCPs and the Civil Dialogue Group.

4.2.4. Sustainability of the Programme's outcomes in relation to the Programme's objectives

This section presents our findings in relation to the following evaluation question:

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

In the following paragraphs, we assess the extent to which the EfCP has been successful in delivering sustainable outcomes in relation to its objectives. Evidence of sustainability can be elicited from projects that have created lasting effects on participants and/or enabled citizens

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[99] Op.cit.

[100] This is also the view reprised by the European Parliament in the Resolution on the implementation of the EfCP Regulation, which highlighted that "NCPs play an important role in raising awareness and providing support and guidance to potential applicants (in particular first-time applicants in target countries), as well as European and national associations of local and regional government and civil society organisations."

to develop a feeling of EU belonging, to engage in further civic activities, to participate in European democratic life and to attract others to engage. In addition, we considered the extent to which beneficiary organisations continue activities after the funding from the EfCP has ceased, by identifying instances of collaboration between beneficiaries in similar events/projects after initial event or activities/projects continuing after funding.

The figure below shows the **opinions of the EfCP beneficiaries who participated in the web-based survey on the impacts of their projects funded through the EfCP**. The respondents were generally positive about the effects felt by their project participants. The impacts that were particularly highlighted were that the participants shared their experience and knowledge with others and that they found their experience memorable, which suggests that the results had the potential to be long-lasting.

Figure 18: Beneficiary survey respondents' views on the impacts of EfCP projects (n=75)
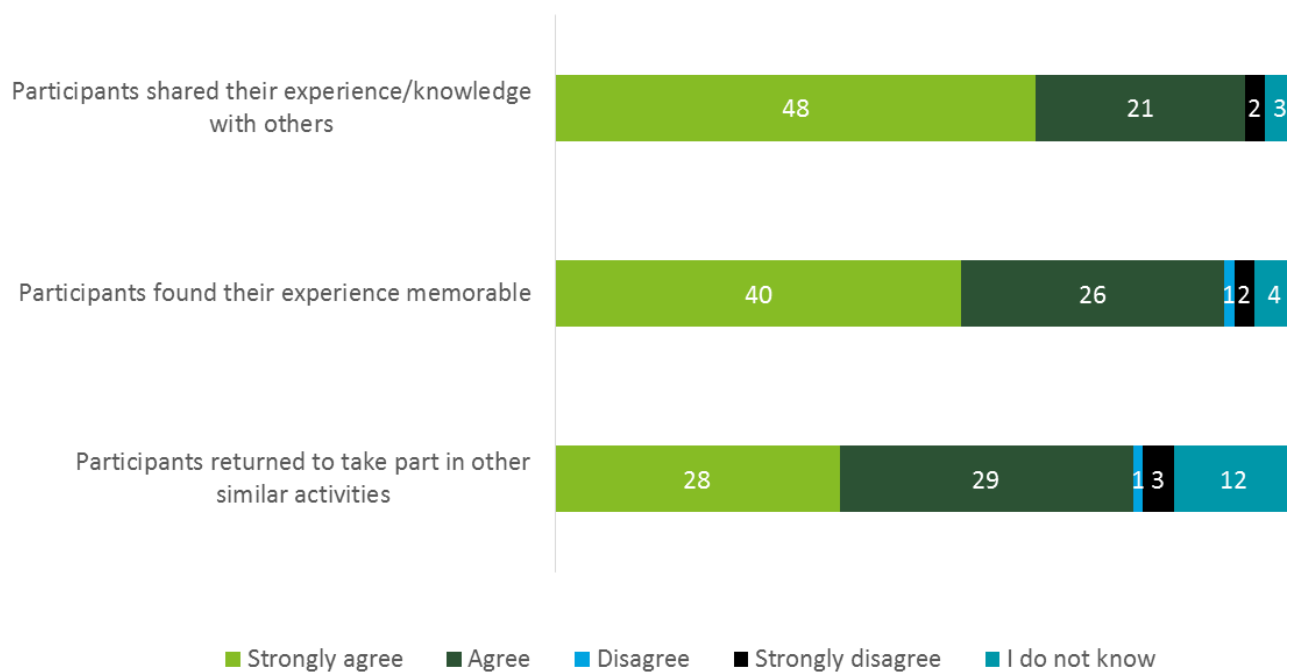
Source: Web-based survey of beneficiaries

The impression of the NCPs was that one of the key factors that makes **the Programme outcomes sustainable is the emphasis on face-to-face interaction**. Although it is costly, face-to-face interaction arguably brings more impact and leaves a lasting impression. The experience of the NCPs suggested that the fact that activities in the Programme mainly take place in person makes a difference for participants in understanding that their everyday life concerns are shared by other citizens across the EU.

The 20 case studies analysed the **follow-up and sustainability plans of the projects**, as well as the transferability of their results. This showed that about half of the projects rely on further financing from EfCP to continue their activities after the funding ends. This was more frequently the case for projects funded under Strand 1. Among the projects that showed the most potential for long-lasting results were the projects supporting the building of networks

of NGOs or local authorities, most frequently in the context of activities undertaken by the Networks of Towns projects. The review showed that a number of these projects had set the scene for lasting cooperation going beyond the period during which funding from the EfCP was available. This was often the result of establishing links among participating partner organisations, which expands cooperation and can result in widening cooperation to other activities and plans for future ones focused on support to civic participation and raising awareness on the remembrance, the common history and values of the Union and the Union's aim.

Two case studies on Town-Twinning projects indicated that these activities can sometimes fall short in delivering sustainable or transferrable outcomes. The evidence shows that Town-Twinning projects may sometimes be restricted to the activities funded by the EfCP as a "one-off". This was also an impression shared by NCPs consulted for the evaluation. The evidence suggests that, in the absence of clear follow-up plans or strategies that would ensure that the project leaves a legacy, this type of project may be more limited in achieving sustainability than other activities funded by the EfCP, notably because they can be liable to focus excessively on socialising "in the moment" rather than fostering a debate with deeper implications. Other Town-Twinning projects however create lasting links between communities. For instance in a project reviewed in the context of the case studies, feedback from the inhabitants showed that the project made a lasting impression and led to subsequent exchanges that took place between municipalities after the project was completed in 2014.

At the mid- term of the programming period, the Programme has the potential to deliver sustainable outcomes in relation to the Programme's objectives.

Most EfCP projects seem to create lasting effects on participants, who often find face-to-face interaction memorable. Participation in EfCP-funded activities can lead to further engagement in civic activities and it is plausible that participants share their experience with others. There are strong indications that a number of EfCP projects result in the creation of networks that last beyond the funding period, by establishing lasting links between the participating organisations, in particular in the context of Networks of Towns.

The one-off nature of most Town-Twinning projects can be inimical to sustainable outcomes because they by their nature do not plan for follow-up, but some Town-Twinning projects do nevertheless create lasting links between participating communities, continuing their exchanges well after projects have ended.

4.3. Efficiency

In this section we look at the efficiency of the Europe for Citizens Programme. As per the Better Regulation Guidelines, "efficiency looks at the costs and benefits of the EU intervention as they accrue to different stakeholders, identifying what factors are driving these costs/benefits and how these factors relate to the EU intervention".

As presented in the Analytical Framework, we examine here the appropriateness and proportionality of the budget allocated to the different Strands and the two different types of grants so as to see whether positive effects are produced and the programme's objectives are met at reasonable cost.

We also present insights on whether there is scope for simplification, including in the application and evaluation process, the project reporting requirements and monitoring process, its structure and guide/priorities. We then make a special reference to the role and involvement of the various players, namely the Programme Committee, the NCPs and the CDG.

The evaluation questions we set out to answer are:

- *Were the activities undertaken in the framework of the EfCP efficient at achieving results at European and national level?*
- *Was the size of the budget allocated to projects funded under Strand 1 and Strand 2 as well as to Horizontal aspects appropriate and proportional to achieve the programme objectives?*
- *Were positive effects achieved at reasonable costs?*
- *Which type of grants (Operating Grants compared to Action Grants) have been the most efficient tool to achieve the objectives of the programme?*
- *Is there any scope for simplification?*

The context is a **total budget** of **EUR 187 718 000**[101] for the duration of the current Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2014-2020. This is EUR 27.3 million (or 12.7%) less than in 2007-2013, when the budget was EUR 215 million. The current budget is also around EUR 15.3 million less than the budget suggested by the Impact assessment carried out in 2011[102], which proposed EUR 203 million with an estimated EUR 29 million per year. Of this**, EUR 67 012 324** was awarded, and some EUR 100,000 less was committed, in the period 2014-2016 covered by this evaluation.

It needs to be borne in mind at the outset that the cost side of the efficiency equation is much easier to quantify than the benefits side. Measuring the benefits achieved for this expenditure

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[101] Representing 0.0171% of the Multiannual Financial Framework: European Parliament (1.2.2017), Report on the implementation of Council Regulation (EU) No 390/2014 of 14 April 2014 establishing the 'Europe for Citizens' programme for the period 2014–2020 (2015/2329(INI)), Committee on Culture and Education, Rapporteur: María Teresa Giménez Barbat.

[102] Brussels, 14.12.2011, SEC(2011) 1563 final, Commission Staff Working Paper, Executive Summary of the Impact Assessment, Accompanying the document Proposal for a Regulation of the Council establishing for the period 2014-2020 the programme "Europe for Citizens" to promote European citizenship.

can only be qualitative because of the broad nature of the objectives, and the external factors which can influence outcomes. We therefore focus our analysis on the results achieved relative to the main cost drivers of the different projects and assess the value for money of the different Strands and type of grants under the Programme.

4.3.1.   Efficiency of Strands 1 and Strands 2

As a starting point, it is relevant to assess whether the money is being spent efficiently in that it is being spent more or less at the same annual rate, so as to provide an even workload for those administering it and one element of predictability for beneficiaries. This is illustrated in the figure below. It also shows that in 2014, the fact that the Regulation was not adopted until April did not present proceeding at an even pace to any great extent. The amount awarded over the years 2014-2016 is 35.7% of the total budget available over the seven-year life of the Programme which is explained by the multi-annual budgetary programming in place (whereas a fully even spend would have resulted in a figure of 42.9%).

Figure 19: EfCP total budget, 2014-2016
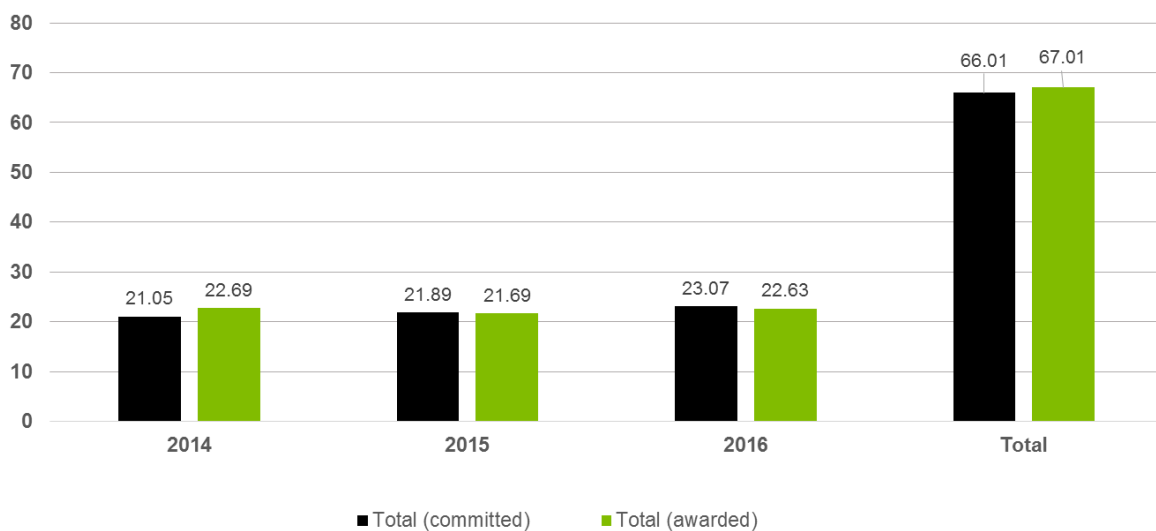
Source: Study team, Commission Implementing Decisions[46] vs DG HOME annual reports on the EfCP activities[26]

The following figures show that the pattern of even expenditure with a slightly slower start in 2014 is also true of the Strands. The Horizontal Actions were able to get off to a faster start, but the nature of the expenditure is different, e.g. funding the NCPs, major events and IT expenditure.

Figure 20: EfCP budget per Strand, 2014-2016

EfCP budget 2014-2016 (in EUR mio), Strand 1

	2014	2015	2016	total
Strand 1 (committed)	4.26	4.5	4.6	13.36
Strand 2 (awarded)	4.69	4.5	4.54	13.73

EfCP budget 2014-2016 (in EUR mio), Strand 2

	2014	2015	2016	total
Strand 1 (committed)	15.45	16.09	17.18	48.72
Strand 2 (awarded)	16.84	16.09	16.99	49.92

EfCP budget 2014-2016 (in EUR mio), Horizontal Action

	2014	2015	2016	total
Strand 1 (committed)	1.35	1.3	1.3	3.95
Strand 2 (awarded)	1.1	1.1	1.1	3.3

Source: Study team, Commission Implementing Decisions[46] vs DG HOME annual reports on the EfCP activities[26]

In terms of the number of grants awarded per type of project under Strand 1 and Strand 2, for all types but Strand 2 Operating Grants, the total number of projects awarded was (far) fewer than the number of projects that it had been planned to support.

Figure 21: EfCP budget per Strand, 2014-2016
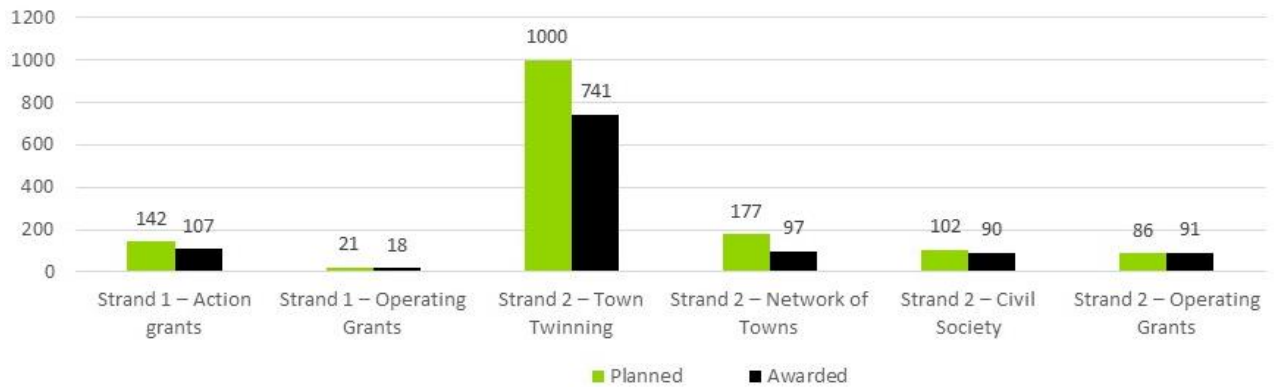
Source: Study team, Commission Implementing Decisions[46] vs DG HOME annual reports on the EfCP activities[26]

However, as already discussed under Effectiveness, the number of projects funded, as well as the number of direct and indirect participants between 2014 and 2016 is significant (as the Program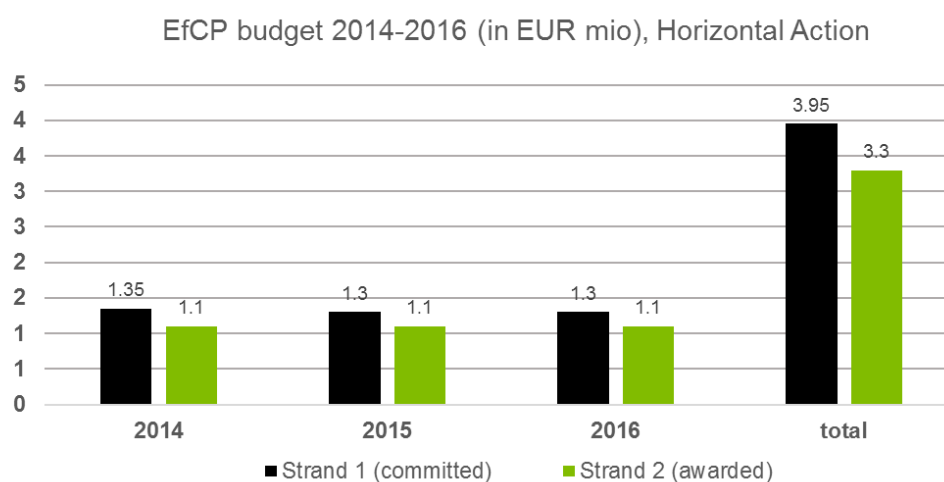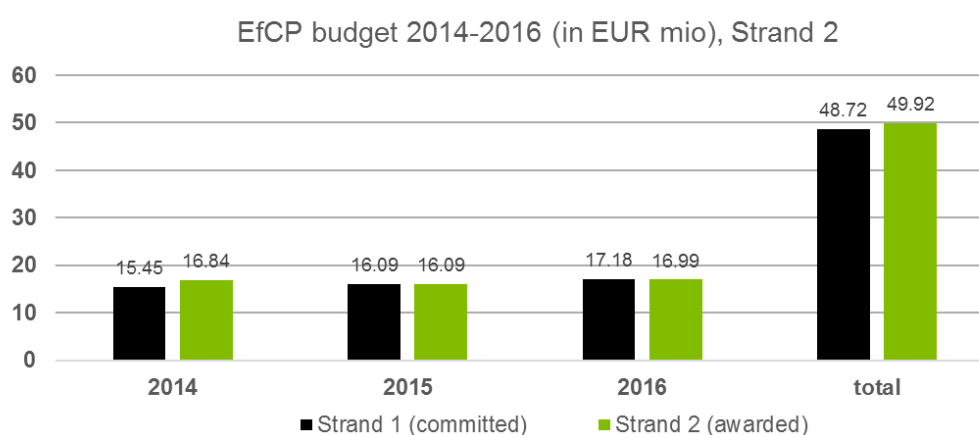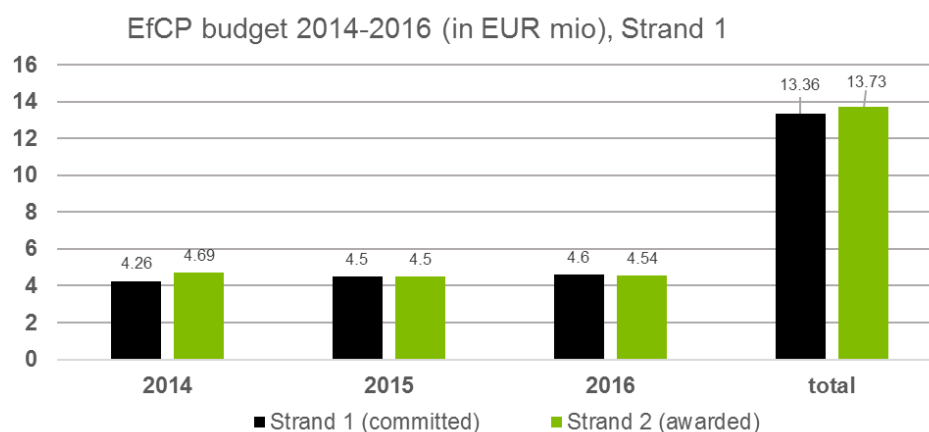me monitoring data shows, activities under Strand 1 and Strand 2 have reached around 300 000 and 3 000 000 people directly. Indirectly, activities under Strand 1 reached 540 000 people whereas for Strand 2 the total was of 3.3 million). This makes a strong case for the Programme having been effective at a low cost.

When we talked to Programme beneficiaries, the size of amount awarded to their project overall meant sufficient funding was available for the lead partner to coordinate and ensure strong outcomes and innovative dissemination of outcomes, especially for Remembrance and Civil Society projects. For Town-Twinning and Network of Towns, the view was that the financial support from the EfCP compared to the expected number of people directly and indirectly involved was low. This underpins the argument of cost-effectiveness even bearing in mind the fact that we have identified scope for greater effectiveness by putting more emphasis on the EU dimension and sustainable outcomes.

Bearing in mind that stakeholders know in advance how much they are likely to receive and can tailor their projects accordingly, they were satisfied with the amounts available. They frequently said they could have absorbed more and some indicated that there is not enough discretion for contingencies and that the amounts available are an obstacle to sufficient follow-up and dissemination, but what stakeholders bemoaned more than the issue of whether the budget per activity was proportionate to the size of the project was the limited budget available overall, leading to low success rates. This can discourage applicants from re-applying or lead to them submitting projects which are not a priority and they feel they can 'afford' not to proceed with.

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

The amounts available are adequate for the aims of the activities for which project coordinators apply, even if there is scope to absorb additional funding, including for follow-

up and dissemination. The results achieved for these amounts per activity strongly suggest cost-effectiveness in complying with the objectives of the Programme.

The size of the individual grants is seen as subsidiary, however, to the broader issue of the efficiency of being obliged to turn down many applicants because the overall budget is so low.

4.3.2. Efficiency of Horizontal Action – "Valorisation"

As explained elsewhere in the report, the Horizontal Action funds the dissemination of the project activities' outcomes, in order to encourage transferability of results and learning exchanges. Under this Action, as per the Commission Implementing Decisions for the years 2014-2016, 10% of the total annual EfCP budget is to be allocated for the following activities: peer reviews (including conferences, networking events, CDG meetings, etc.), co-funding of the NCPs, and the reimbursement of external experts engaged for the evaluation of applications, as well as some dissemination activities including the co-funding of the VALOR platform, and the updates of the EU Citizenship portal.

The table below summarises the activities undertaken under Horizontal Actions, as per DG HOME reports.

Table 17: Horizontal Action activities as executed

Year	Activities executed
2014	• Co-fund **25 NCPs** with **EUR 900 000** • **Events** (4) of a total of **EUR 441 057** financed under the 2013 EfCP budget. • **Dissemination tools**: 1) EU Citizenship Portal pilot, 2) "E-mapping" project. • **NCPs**: Two consultation meetings with NCPs. • **Evaluation**: Ex post evaluation of the Europe for Citizens Programme 2007-2013. • **CDG**: Two meetings took place in June and in December 2014.
2015	• Co-fund **27 NCPs** with **EUR 900 000** • Support to **project selection** with **EUR 200 000** • **Events** (2) of a total of **EUR 172 732** financed under the 2014 EfCP budget. • **Dissemination tools**: 1) Regular updates of the EU Citizenship Portal, 2) A platform: A new database of projects of **EUR 53 500**. • **NCPs**: Two consultation meetings with NCPs. • **CDG:** One meeting. • **Evaluation**: On the basis of the external evaluation, in December 2015 the European Commission published a political evaluation report to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. • **Civil dialogue**: One meeting in June 2015.
2016	• Co-fund **29 NCPs** with **EUR 900 000** • Support to **project selection** with **EUR 200 000** • **Events** (2) of a total of **EUR 313 113** budget under the 2015 EfCP budget. • **Dissemination tools:** 1) Europe for Citizens database: VALOR with a total amount of EUR 53 500 (co-funded) 2) Newsletter: three editions of the newsletter were published during the year 2016.

Year	Activities executed
	• **NCPs:** One consultation meeting. • **CDG:** One meeting. • **Evaluation:** Mid-term evaluation of the Europe for Citizens Programme 2014-2020.

Source: Study team, DG HOME annual reports on the EfCP activities[9]

Over the past three years, EACEA organised 8 events. The annual budget for events was comparatively very high for the year 2014 when four events took place, whereas in the two consecutive years only 2 events were organised and funded. However, the total budget (spent on two events each) in 2015 and 2016 differs significantly (from EUR 170 000 to EUR 310 000). During these events, a number of stakeholders met annually. Despite the description of the events in DG HOME annual reports, the exact number of participants was not always reported, with the exception of the Remembrance Networking annual meeting which was attended by around 100-200 organisations each year.

It is not possible to assess the value for money of these activities with the exception of the recurrent expenditures of the NCPs. In the case of the NCPs, the budget has been unchanged for a number of years, as NCP staff lamented to us, so it is reasonable to assume that they are doing more with less (in real terms) and improving their efficiency. The stakeholder reaction we received on their activities was largely positive, particularly in their assistance to potential beneficiaries. This thus suggests that they are cost-effective.

The lump sum (EUR 55,000 for the six Member States with the largest population and EUR 25,000 for the others) is linked to holding a minimum number of events with a minimum number of participants. This is perceived by the NCPs consulted as a rather technical – and at the same time over-simplistic – method of calculation which fails to compensate them adequately for dissemination and communication activities, such as website maintenance, managing and updating social media accounts, producing publications, carrying out face-to-face and phone consultations, or innovating via online rather than physical events. These amounts have remained the same since 2007.

On the projects' selection process, EUR 200 000 was spent in 2015 and another EUR 200 000 in 2016 on the experts evaluating the applications. There were 51 experts in 2015 and 54 in 2016 which corresponds to EUR 3,900 and EUR 3,700 per expert in the respective years.

Yet, the amount of budget spent on other activities (i.e. NCPs meetings, dissemination tools, etc.) was not always clearly broken-down in the annual reports.

Overall, there is no baseline against which to assess the selection of activities under the Horizontal Action. Annual NCP and CDG meetings can reasonably be assumed to be a minimum of must-haves (and there has been a tendency to cut back or combine meetings because of budget pressures), and items such as Evaluation are also obligatory, but otherwise there is no dissemination/communication strategy to provide overarching context for choosing specific events to be present at or to prioritise other communication activities.

Beneficiaries interviewed regretted the fact that it had never been clear to them how the annual budget for Horizontal Actions annual budget is actually spent. They would like to see

more information on when events are taking place and improvements to the VALOR platform to make it more user-friendly.[103] We note that the use of VALOR for dissemination of results and good practice is currently the subject of an evaluation of the dissemination and exploitation of results of Erasmus+ and Creative Europe, which could contain replicable results for Europe for Citizens.

The European Parliament CULT Committee has expressed similar concerns in the past and has 'called on the Commission and the EACEA to account publicly for the expenses incurred through Horizontal Action'[104].

Within the Horizontal Action, there are certain 'must-have' recurring activities, which take up the lion's share of the budget, notably co-funding of NCPs and meetings with these and the Civil Dialogue Group.

The budget for NCPs has not increased while beneficiaries remain satisfied with the service provided, thus suggesting cost-effectiveness from doing more with less (in real terms). The way their funding is calculated is event- and participant-focused and does not take the range of activities that they undertake fully into account or individual differences between them.

There is a no framework within which to assess the choice of dissemination activities as there is no overarching dissemination strategy and an absence of monitoring, e.g. of the success of events.

4.3.3. Action Grants versus Operating Grants

Our research has shown that there has been an ongoing debate around the relative merits of one-off Action Grants projects versus Operating Grants, whether the budget is large enough to accommodate both given the ambitions of the Programme, and if not therefore which is more efficient.

The views collected from the stakeholders indicate that the debate continues, but overall the view was that there should continue to be a place for both and that they fulfil different roles which mean it cannot be said that one is more or less efficient than the other.

The nature of an Operating Grant is purely to provide funding for relevant organisations to operate. The consensus collected is that these grants are vital to the survival of the recipient CSOs. EU-level interviewees, CDG members and respondents to the public consultation agreed that the current system of Operating Grants provide a minimum of stability and an opportunity for long-term planning to organisations which are essential to the development

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[103] As noted elsewhere, the speed at which changes can be made to VALOR is not altogether in the hands of the Programme's administrators and has been delayed by the fact that it is taking longer to complete the migration from Documentum to Drupal than had been envisaged.
[104] Report on the implementation of Council Regulation (EU) No 390/2014 of 14 April 2014 establishing the 'Europe for Citizens' programme for the period 2014–2020 (2015/2329(INI)), Committee on Culture and Education, Rapporteur: María Teresa Giménez Barbat.

of civil society and they currently operate in a difficult financial climate. Their argument was that Operating Grant beneficiaries are very active and proactive in ensuring the participatory approach and by their nature, they are sustainable multipliers. Action Grants are project-specific and have a short life span.

The counter-argument heard from many interviewees, including the NCPs, is that the stability offered by Operating Grants should not come to constitute life support, but that large Civil Society Organisations or think tanks should over time be able to find alternative sources of funding, i.e. the Operating Grant should be a form of seed funding. Some public consultation respondents also questioned the validity of the eligibility of think tanks and research organisations to receive financing in the form of an Operating Grant, as they believed these have an easier access to other forms of financing.

When it comes to the lump-sum approach currently implemented to co-fund the projects via Action Grants, beneficiaries consulted during the evaluation work overall praised the current lump sum approach. By way of confirmation, more than three quarters of the respondents to the web-based survey (77%) were very or rather satisfied with the current approach. In the same vein, the NCPs agreed that the move to a lump-sum system for the Action Grants had been an improvement.

Both NCPs and the CDG members nevertheless saw a disadvantage in the fact that the current system does not carry any weighting to reflect different levels of prosperity in different Member States (and generally therefore costs) or make sufficient allowance for travel costs, with the result that there is a bias towards cooperating with neighbouring countries rather than selecting partners solely on merit.

The lump sum system was also felt by most of the CDG members to impose a higher administrative burden on Operating Grant beneficiaries than the former flat rate system because of the need to re-apply each year under their framework agreement.

Overall, the current rate of pre-financing was considered satisfactory by a majority of NCPs. Pre-financing is currently available up to 50% of the grant for Networks of Towns, European Remembrance, and Civil Society Projects (but not for Town-Twinning). Pre-financing of 80% is available for Operating Grants. However, NCPs pointed out that the provisions on co-financing in the Programme guide are confusing, as they are limited to a single line stating the entire project costs cannot be borne by the EU.

Action and Operating Grants fulfil different functions – one-off project funding as opposed to long-term operating stability - and their efficiency must be judged on their own terms in the light of the objectives of the Europe for Citizens programme without it being possible to compare their efficiency in relative terms. Results produced via Operating Grants seem to be more efficient, thanks to the nature and the profile of beneficiaries but also thanks to the multiannual framework which now allows long-term conceptualisation and implementation of activities, compared to the shorter term projects implemented under Action Grants.

With three years' experience of the lump sum, the move from the flat rate has been smooth and the new system works well. However, the inflexibility in taking different costs of living and travel costs over long distances into account is a limitation for some projects, which would justify review.

4.3.4. Where is further simplification needed?

In the following paragraphs, we analyse and present the scope for simplification, including via greater efficiency, in:

- Programme structure, guide/priorities;
- Application process and evaluation
- Monitoring process;
- Monitoring indicators; and
- Reporting requirements/financial management.

We do so against the background of considerable simplification having taken place, so that it will become clear in reading the section that in most areas, the issue is one of fine-tuning.

Programme structure, guide/priorities

One of the simplifications implemented in the new EfCP programming period 2014-2020 was the introduction of only two Strands (compared to four action strands in the previous Programme 2007-2013), accompanied by the Horizontal Action. The structure of the different types the actions/measures/types of projects also became clearer, compared to the previous programming period, as it is illustrated in Figure 1.

The importance of having two Strands was explored in particular at the CDG member workshop in particular. The vast majority of CDG member workshop attendees agreed on the importance of both Strands of the Programme, although not all perceived a link between the two. Those seeing a relationship believed that it makes sense to have only one Programme dealing with democracy: the past and lessons learnt (Strand 1) together with the present and the future (Strand 2). However, they commented that there is **a need for further explanation and exploitation of the relationship between both Strands**, which would consequently increase the attractiveness of the Programme as an initiative that can positively impact the citizens' daily life.

Many stakeholders considered the introduction of multi-annual priorities (as of the year 2016) as a positive development, but they saw room for improvement. They regarded the **issues falling under these priorities as still somewhat narrow.** They mentioned promotion of mobility, intercultural discovery and best practice sharing at the local level as possible areas for the future.

The **Programme Guide** was generally found to be helpful, but some scope was identified by stakeholders for more precise definition of what themes can cover and greater clarity on expectations of how to develop synergies with the European Solidarity Corps.

Application Process and Evaluation

In the area of applications and evaluation process, there have been a number of simplification measures in recent years[105], including the use of lump sums, e-reports, the eligibility check addressed by the e-Forms applications, etc. In particular relation to the latter, as an online application system has been in place since 2014. Each applicant receives a Participant Identification Code (PIC). This registration portal saves the applicant's information and allows them to re-apply for EU funding more easily, and to change their data themselves without having to notify EACEA. In 2015 the Programme received more than 90% applications online.

As stated by the Programme's beneficiaries, this simplification has positively affected the quality of applications and the willingness of potential beneficiaries to apply. The majority of respondents to the web-based survey (67%) found the application process to be "very" or "rather satisfactory".

Although the application process itself appears to be functioning quite well, CDG members suggested that there are a number of overlaps in the application form, which is not efficient. For example, applicants are required to specify several times the objectives of their project and its correspondence with the multiannual priorities and specific objectives. In addition, having to reapply each year under the framework partnership agreements for Operating Grants is seen as an additional administrative burden, and one that stakeholders believe is unnecessary or could at least be simplified.

In relation to the **feedback received on applications**, a number of respondents commented on their rejected applications and informed us that the refusal letter(s) did not explicitly explain the reasons for the decision and more quality feedback[106] would be welcome.

Many respondents to the public consultation, commenting to an open question, also questioned the quality of the evaluation work; they believe that there are too few evaluators and/or they are given too little time to provide their assessment, ultimately affecting the overall quality of the application evaluation. On a similar note, public consultation respondents expressed concerns about the competencies of the evaluators (e.g. thematic expertise, experience with projects) and therefore, the quality of the evaluation results.[107]

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

[106] The most common reasons for unsuccessful applications were: inconsistency with the Programme's objectives; weak expected impact and involvement of citizens; quality of the activity plan of the project; dissemination.

[107] The evaluation process was not investigated in depth in this evaluation, however this concern was expressed by numerous stakeholders across all data collection tools.

Monitoring process (beneficiaries reporting to EACEA and EACEA reporting to the Commission)

As explained in the ToR for this mid-term evaluation, the Commission has a 'permanent monitoring system combining the ongoing monitoring of the projects based on the information obtained from beneficiaries with approximately 20 monitoring visits of projects per year'.

When it comes to the **monitoring requirements for the individual EfCP projects**, a total of 84% of the survey respondents replied that they do collect feedback.

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

Project beneficiaries and CDG workshop participants commented that the use of project results seems limited as the Commission puts too much emphasis on the number of attendees at an activity rather than quality of attendees (they gave the example of reaching 1 000 young people versus 20 politicians than may be more appropriate to act as multipliers). Interviewees identified a gap in going beyond quantitative measure to ensure that results are used in policymaking.

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

Feedback from the online focus groups with **NCPs** showed that in their case, there was a high level of satisfaction on the part of the NCPs regarding their collaboration with the Agency. An initiative that was welcomed was visits to EACEA to meet the increasing need for information and training. In 2015, five NCP managers from Belgium, Finland, France, Latvia and Romania visited EACEA, and in 2016 another five from France, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, and Lithuania.

Monitoring indicators

Annex 3 of the Regulation[1] states that the Programme shall be measured against a number of performance-related indicators. A number of indicators for monitoring the programme are provided in the Regulation Annex which are related to the impact and result indicators also contained in the impact assessment accompanying the proposal for a Regulation[55].

The table below provides an overview of the information gathered from the Agency, the Commission and Programme reports on the performance, impact and result related indicators.

Table 18: Strand 1 monitoring indicators

A.   Performance" related indicators specified in Regulation (Annex III)
The number of participants who are directly involved in the Programme under Strand 1
The number of persons indirectly reached by the Programme under Strand 1
The number of projects under Strand 1
The quality of the project applications and the degree to which the results of selected projects can be further used/transferred[108]
Percentage of 1st time applicants
B.   "Result" related indicators (Impact Assessment)
Percentage of 1st time beneficiaries

Table 19: Strand 2 monitoring indicators

A.   Performance" related indicators specified in Regulation (Annex III)
The number of participants who are directly involved in the Programme under Strand 2
The number of persons indirectly reached by the Programme under Strand 2
The number of projects under Strand 2
The number of participating organisations
The perception of the Union and its institutions by the beneficiaries
The quality of project applications
The percentage of first time applicants
The number of transnational partnerships including different types of stakeholders
The number of Networks of towns
The number and quality of policy initiatives following-up on activities supported by the Programme at the local or European level
The geographical coverage of the activities: (i)   the comparison between the percentage of projects submitted by one Member State as a lead partner and the percentage of its population in the total population of the Union;   (ii)   the comparison between the percentage of projects selected per Member State as a lead partner and the percentage of its population in the total population of the Union;   (iii)   the comparison between the percentage of projects submitted by one Member State as a lead partner or co-partner and the percentage of its population in the total population of the Union;   (iv)   the comparison between the percentage of projects selected per Member State as a lead partner or co-partner and the percentage of its population in the total population of the Union

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[108] Yet, data is only collected on the quality of project applications based on the lowest and highest scores received each year. The degree to which the results of selected projects can be further used/transferred is not specifically monitored. However, it can be inferred that this element is assessed during the evaluation of project applications.

| A. Performance" related indicators specified in Regulation (Annex III) |
B. "Result" related indicators (Impact Assessment)
Percentage of 1st time beneficiaries
Number of transnational and multi-partner partnerships and networks
Correlation between number of participants in the programme and total population per country

Source: Study team, based on Regulation[1] Annex III and Impact Assessment accompanying the proposal for Regulation[55]

The indicators contained in both the Regulation and the Impact Assessment were built into the analytical framework that guided this evaluation. The quality and usefulness of the performance, impact and result indicators, as well as the related data was assessed by the team.

As also explained in the beginning of this report (see Methodology section 3.2) overall, some variances were noted in the data quality between the indicators and the indicators collected for each of the three years.

The team received from EACEA a document called "Working Programme Statements (ref. DB2018)" but there, the figures of direct participants and indirect audiences were rounded for each year. In addition, for the indicator "quality of the project applications and the degree to which the results of selected projects can be further used/transferred", data was only collected on the quality of project applications based on the lowest scores received each year. The degree to which the results of selected projects can be further used/transferred is not specifically monitored, but the prospects are taken into account in the award criterion 'Dissemination'[109].

In addition, EACEA informed the team that the indicator "number and quality of policy initiatives following-up on activities supported by the Programme at the local or European level" was not collected, whereas for the geographical coverage of the activities, EACEA performance monitoring data provides the number of Member States submitting projects as a lead partner but nothing additional.

It is also apparent that **the indicators in the Regulation and those in the Impact Assessment are not always directly comparable.** Moreover, indicators in the Impact Assessment are accompanied by long-term (in the case of impact indicators) and medium-term (in the case of result indicators) targets, but without any definition of medium and long term.

A key issue is also the fact that different indicators exist for each strand (i.e. objective). For the evaluation, it was not only difficult to draw directly comparable conclusions on similar activities under the two Strands, but information on baselines is not available and not all the data envisaged is collected.

We identified in the previous section that these are obstacles to assessing Effectiveness and the same is clearly true of Efficiency. Our analysis suggests that improving the implementation

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[109] EfCP Programme Guide.

of the Regulation in this area clearly shows scope, however, for discretion in applying the requirements of the Regulation, discretion which appears to exist as it is already being exercised. The exercise of this discretion could be used as an opportunity to reassess the purpose of this monitoring and design indicators accordingly, so that the overall result is simpler to understand, more effective and more efficient.

Reporting requirements/Financial management

The stakeholders consulted argued in consensus that the development of the system of lump-sums and unit costs has simplified financial management for the beneficiaries and for the Agency (see also following paragraphs). In addition, the project beneficiaries do not need to send to EACEA any expenditure report or a budget with all expenditure listed. The budget is part of the application e-Form (part C.5), available on line. Therefore, no additional Excel sheet needs to be uploaded. To receive the payment of the grant, the beneficiary must publish on its website the information containing the details on the project implemented (i.e. place and dates of the events, number of participants in the events per country, brief description of the activities). Therefore, the beneficiary does not need to identify the actual eligible costs covered or to provide supporting documents, notably accounting statements, to prove the amount declared as lump sum.

The electronic application form has also added to the simplicity and user-friendliness of the EfCP. The online final report system is also functioning, and the 2016 version of the report template has been improved based on feedback received by the users.

Beneficiaries consulted during the study were indeed in favour of the simple eForm and especially for those whose audience is municipalities or which have very short projects, and are therefore accessing a subsidy of EUR 5 000 (e.g. Town-Twinning), this makes applying fast and simple.

The only downside noted was that the final report sometimes lacks the flexibility to allow beneficiaries to fully report on their activities and provide supplementary information.

The current structure of the EfCP, with the two Strands and a Horizontal Action has been proved to work satisfactorily. There could be greater clarity about whether the Strands are truly stand-alone or a relationship is intended in order to establish a continuum between past, present and future.

There may be room for some fine-tuning of the final report submitted to beneficiaries to allow a greater opportunity to report on project results and to simplify the process of re-applying for Operating Grants, but the simplification carried out over the last two years has been a major, and beneficial, leap forward. Those steps have included the multi-annual priorities and a range of e-measures. Introducing greater transparency into the evaluation process would improve satisfaction levels among successful and unsuccessful applicants.

The monitoring process would benefit from review, to define baselines, choose workable indicators, which leave room for qualitative assessment in addition to numerical reporting, and simplify the process overall.

4.4. Coherence

This section presents the answers to the evaluation questions pertaining to the external and internal coherence of the EfCP.

In accordance with the Better Regulation Guidelines, "the evaluation should look at how well the intervention works both internally and with other EU interventions". The external assessment of coherence involves looking at how well or not different actions work together, by analysing supporting evidence that EU interventions complement or contradict each other. Similarly, analysing internal coherence presupposes looking at how the various internal components of an EU intervention operate together to achieve its objectives.

The evaluation questions we were asked to answer were:

- *To what extent has the programme so far proved complementarity to other EU funding programmes with related objectives, in particular in the area of citizens' rights education and culture?*
- *How well did the EfCP programme work together with other EU instruments, in particular in the area of education, vocational training and youth (including voluntary service), sport, culture, fundamental rights, social inclusion, gender equality, combating discrimination, research and innovation, information society, enlargement and the external action of the Union?*
- *To what extent are the objectives of different strands of the programme consistent and mutually supportive? What evidence exists of synergies between the different strands and actions? How well do both strands work together?*

By way of background, the **ex-post evaluation of the EfCP for the programming period 2007-2013** determined that the EfCP was sufficiently distinct from other programmes in terms of its scope, objectives, activities and target groups to provide a complementary offering[63]. While it is not possible to draw direct comparisons given the significant changes that have occurred in the policy landscape in the meantime, we have performed a similar assessment of the EfCP's offering in relation to EU funding programmes with a similar scope and other EU instruments of relevance for civic participation. Our analysis also looked at the potential overlap in provision and target audiences.

4.4.1. Complementarity and synergies of the EfCP with other EU funding programmes

This section answers the following evaluation question:

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

Having well informed and democratically active European citizens is crucial to the legitimacy and democratic accountability of the European Union institutions. The aspiration to involve citizens in the EU is shared by several initiatives at EU level and there are a number of actions and programmes managed by the European Commission that focus on citizens and/or increasing levels of citizen engagement.

The following EU funding programmes are dedicated in particular to the enhancement of civic participation, in addition to the EfCP:

- **Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme**[110]
- **Erasmus+**[111], and
- **Creative Europe**[112].

The Study Team performed extensive desk research and analysed a significant number of programme documents relating to these programmes in order to gain a better understanding of their linkages and potential overlaps with the EfCP. The methods used for this analysis were the comparison of objectives set out in legal texts, the assessment of the activities funded and potential target groups in the programme guides, as well as other relevant programme documentation. In the following paragraphs, we first provide an overview of the relationship of these programmes with the EfCP to determine if there is complementarity or overlap in their offer, then we assess any potential or actual synergies between the EfCP and funding programmes with related objectives that may be observed in practice.

Complementarity of the EfCP with other EU funding programmes with related objectives, in particular in the area of citizens' rights, education and culture

There is a difference in that Erasmus+ and Creative Europe are "vertical" sectoral programmes, while the Rights Equality and Citizenship Programme is a "horizontal" programme that is sufficiently similar to the EU for Citizens Programme that a merger was

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[110] Regulation (EU) No 1381/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 establishing a Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme for the period 2014 to 2020.

[111] Regulation (EU) 1288/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing 'Erasmus+': the Union programme for education, training, youth and sport.

[112] Regulation EU 1295/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing the Creative Europe Programme (2014 to 2020).

considered (but rejected) at the time of the Impact Assessment for the current Europe for Citizens Programme[55].

Where they are all alike is that these programmes share their target audiences with the EfCP by reaching out to a greater or lesser extent to organisations active in the field of youth, culture, civil society and education. The similarity of target groups between the EfCP, Creative Europe and Erasmus+ is also evident from the responses to our web-based survey, as shown in the figure below. Half of the beneficiaries who completed the survey had received funding for remembrance/citizenship-related activities from other EU sources. The number was particularly high for citizenship-related activities, which indicates the high potential for synergies with EfCP. Among others actions of interest and relevance to the beneficiaries, the beneficiaries cited Creative Europe, Erasmus/Erasmus+ (including Youth in Action) and the European Voluntary Service.

Figure 22: Beneficiary survey respondents receiving funding from other EU sources (n=75)
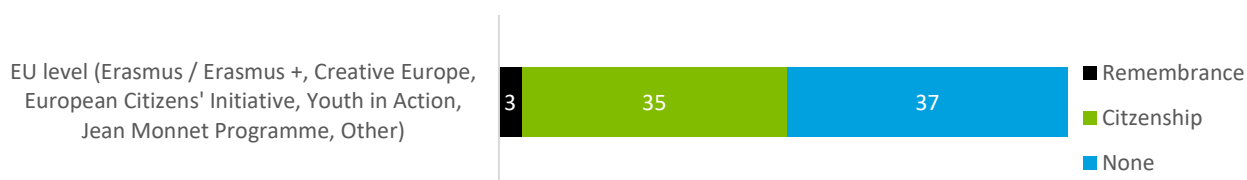
Source: Web-based survey to beneficiaries

However, while these programmes may cater for comparable stakeholders, these programmes are fundamentally different in their offering and consider active citizenship from distinct points of view as described below, and which are summed up in the following table:

Programme	Objective (related to EfCP)	Ultimate target group	Type of funding
Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme	*"Contribute to the further development of an area where equality and the rights of persons are promoted,"* including the specific objective on the promotion of *"rights deriving from Union citizenship."*	Mobile EU citizens	Project Grants Operating Grants
Erasmus+	Specific objective for Youth is ''*to improve the level of key competences and skills of young people, including those with fewer opportunities, as well as to promote participation in democratic life in Europe and the labour market, active citizenship, intercultural dialogue, social inclusion and solidarity"*. Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices supports *"strategic partnerships*	Young people	Project Grants Operating Grants

Programme	Objective (related to EfCP)	Ultimate target group	Type of funding
	aimed at developing and implementing joint initiatives, including youth initiatives and citizenship projects that promote active citizenship, social innovation, and participation in democratic life."		
Creative Europe	General objective to *"safeguard, develop and promote European cultural and linguistic diversity and to promote Europe's cultural heritage".*	Creative and cultural sector	Project Grants European Heritage Label given to historical sites with a symbolic European value, which have played a significant role in the history and culture of Europe and/or the building of the Union.

Source: Study Team, based on relevant programme documentation

Rights, Equality and Citizenship (REC) Programme: Activities encouraging democratic and civic participation of citizens

In the 2014-2020 programming period, the **Rights, Equality and Citizenship (REC)** programme funds actions that promote awareness and knowledge of the rights deriving from EU citizenship and its underlying values, such as activities on developing, identifying and promoting the exchange and dissemination of best practices implemented across the EU at local/regional/national level to foster the successful *inclusion and participation of mobile EU citizens in the host EU country's civic and political life*[113]. These types of activity are closely related to the scope of EfCP ("to encourage democratic and civic participation of citizens at Union level"), yet the focus is slightly different, as this aspect of the REC programme specifically targets mobile EU citizens.

The REC programme also provides funding to grassroots projects seeking to create *better understanding between communities, including through intercultural activities*. Similar themes feature in the current multi-annual priorities of EfCP's Strand 2 on democratic engagement and civic participation, i.e. "Combatting stigmatisation of "immigrants" and building counter narratives to foster intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding", but also in the objective of raising awareness of [the Union's] common values. The 2011 Impact Assessment[55] considered a merger between the EfCP and the (future) REC Programme. However, this idea was rejected after an assessment concluding that the objectives and target groups of the two Programmes are (too) different and there was no evidence of possible

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[113] Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme - Work Programme for 2016, Annex to the Commission Implementing Decision, accessible at http://ec.europa.eu/justice/grants1/programmes-2014-2020/files/rec_awp_2016/rec_awp_2016_annex_en.pdf.

synergies. The objectives of the REC programme connect to the EfCP's only in as far as they include the promotion of the rights deriving from Union citizenship as a (small) aspect of the REC programme. However, this is certainly not the main focus – this is reflected in the limited budget allocated to this type of activity in the annual programmes of the REC.

While there appears to be a certain overlap in the topics covered by the REC programme and EfCP, the activities funded by REC relating to mobile citizens are specifically focused on the exchange of good practices and strengthened cooperation between key actors, capacity building and training activities, and the development of dissemination and awareness raising activities (rather than the direct engagement with citizens). There is also differentiation with EfCP in the target group. These activities especially aim to increase the awareness of mobile EU citizens of their right to vote in local and EU elections and take part in other forms of civic and political engagement in their host Member States. The emphasis here is on "mobile" EU citizens and the promotion of their participation and inclusion by raising their awareness of the rights they hold as mobile EU citizens, whereas the scope of EfCP is to reach EU citizens and enhance democratic and civic participation of all citizens.

Erasmus+: Education

Erasmus+ enables people to study, train, volunteer or gain professional experience in a different country, thus (in our understanding) contributing to *promoting active citizenship and solidarity*. The Erasmus+ Programme[114], through the call for proposals "Civil Society Cooperation in the field of Education and Training and Youth", provides structural support, in the form of Operating Grants, to European non-governmental organisations and EU-wide networks active in the field of education and training or in the field of youth, in order to *boost the overall participation of NGOs in education and youth*.

EfCP Operating Grants, on the other hand, target any NGO audience on citizens' participation in the democratic life of the EU and those active in the field of EU remembrance. This may occasionally mean the same civil society organisation is applying under both programmes, though a review of the project selection suggests that the overlap among beneficiaries is not great.

The **Jean Monnet programme[115]** is part of Erasmus+ and aims at stimulating teaching, research and reflection in the field of European integration studies at the level of higher education institutions within and outside the EU. EU studies focus on the study of Europe in its entirety with particular emphasis on the European integration process. As such, they promote active European citizenship, enhancing awareness of the Union and facilitating future engagement of citizens. The focus of Jean Monnet can thus be seen as one means of providing an understanding of the concept of active citizenship in a European context that could then be taken forward through the EfCP.

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[114] The EU programme for education, training, youth and sport (which includes the sub-programmes Youth in Action, Lifelong Learning Programme (Erasmus, Comenius, Leonardo da Vinci, Grundtvig and Jean Monnet) and international higher education programmes (Erasmus Mundus).

[115] For more information, please see https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/actions/jean-monnet_en.

Creative Europe: Culture

Creative Europe is the European Commission's framework programme for support to the culture and audiovisual sectors, with a specific sub-programme for culture. Creative Europe's general objective to "safeguard, develop and promote European cultural and linguistic diversity and to promote Europe's cultural heritage" is related to the EfCP's general objective to "contribute to citizens' understanding of the Union, its shared history and diversity". The shared objectives focused on the promotion of diversity and European heritage resonate strongly with both programmes. In addition, the cultural and creative sectors are of great importance for the EU because the European integration process is also a cultural project, and these sectors are essential for safeguarding Europe's cultural diversity and common heritage.[116]

Thus, the objectives of these programmes are slightly overlapping. Our research also found that the two programmes have similar target groups. However, in Creative Europe the culture dimension is predominant even where there is a citizenship dimension, the two programmes can be deemed complementary

Creative Europe has a **European Heritage Label** (EHL) which has similarities with EfCP's remembrance activities. The EHL was developed to recognise sites that have been particularly symbolic for the European integration process and can play an educational role in helping bridge the gap between the EU and citizens. The candidates are required to submit a project highlighting and presenting the European dimension of their site to a European audience. The complementarity between this action and the EfCP is particularly evident in the wording of its objectives to strengthen European citizens' sense of belonging to the Union, on the basis of shared values and elements of European history and cultural heritage and to strengthen intercultural dialogue.

The EHL is given to sites (which can be transnational) with a symbolic European value, which have played a significant role in the history and culture of Europe and/or the building of the Union. Thus, it does not support projects in the way the EfCP does, but aims to promote similar themes to EU citizens at large. This connection is further emphasised in the decision establishing the EHL, which refers to the importance of enhancing the EU citizens' understanding on their "common values, history and culture as key elements of their membership of a society founded on the principles of freedom, democracy, respect for human rights, cultural and linguistic diversity, tolerance and solidarity" reflected in their EU citizenship "which complements national citizenship of the respective Member States and is an important element in safeguarding and strengthening the process of European integration". Raising awareness on common cultural heritage also contributes to the strengthening of the essential support EU citizens can give to European integration. The focus of EfCP is not on cultural heritage and sites in particular, but rather on raising awareness on remembrance, common history and values, which complements the activities of the EHL.

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[116] 2017 Annual Work Programme for the implementation of the Creative Europe Programme; C(2016)5822 of 16 September 2016.

Opportunities to further develop the synergies between the EfCP and other activities in the protection of cultural heritage will come in 2018, the first **European Year of Cultural Heritage** which will see activities encouraging people to explore Europe's cultural heritage, as well as reflect on its unique value for European citizens.[117] Europe's cultural heritage constitutes "a shared source of remembrance, understanding, identity, dialogue, cohesion and creativity for Europeans and played a formative role in the genesis of the EU", as stated in the preamble to the Treaty on European Union (TEU) stating that *"signatories drew inspiration from the cultural, religious and humanist inheritance of Europe."*[118]

In addition, European cultural heritage allows citizens to understand the past and to look to their (shared) future, an objective which is shared by the EfCP. Our research found indications that the EfCP will achieve complementarity with this European Year, as we were told that it is already envisaged that cultural heritage will be a priority for the EfCP work programme for 2018, potentially resulting in projects that will take the values of this European Year forward. DG HOME was at the time this report was written already cooperating with DG EAC on the preparatory work for the European Year.

Findings on complementarity

The analysis of three other EU funding programmes with similar objectives and target groups in the preceding paragraphs did not identify any obvious overlaps in provision, but rather highlighted the subtle complementarity between the EfCP and programmes with related objectives in the area of citizen's rights, education and culture. They all have clear positions in the spectrum of funding programmes and we did not encounter any confusion among potential beneficiaries.

The interviews with Programme Committee members showed alignment with the **ex-post evaluation of the 2007 – 2013 programme**[63]**,** which concluded that the EfCP fills a gap in EU policy, which would otherwise fail to involve citizens in civil society and generate interest among EU citizens' in questions pertaining to EU identity/integration. These stakeholders perceive the EfCP as still unique insofar as it links the CSOs and Town-Twinning movement on an EU level, funding activities which would not be happening at all without the EfCP, or to a much smaller extent and often only locally. This view was broadly shared by NCPs and the Civil Dialogue Group, as well as stakeholders contributing to the Public Consultation.

This consensus suggests that the premise for the EfCP's unique offering is still valid. In addition, the wide range of activities offered by the EfCP and participating stakeholders indicate that the Programme reaches beyond the shared target audiences with other programmes. The case studies show that EfCP also involves members of the hard to reach groups, such as prisoners, ex-convicts, alcoholics, addicts and people with disabilities, which are not necessarily a priority in the other programmes.

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[117] For more information, please visit the European Commission's Culture website: https://ec.europa.eu/culture/european-year-cultural-heritage-2018_en.
[118] Recital (1); Decision (EU) 2017/864 of the European Parliament and the Council of 17 May 2017 on a European Year of Cultural Heritage (2018); OJEU L131 of 20 May 2017.

Synergies of the EfCP with other EU funding programmes with related objectives, in particular in the area of citizens' rights, education and culture

While the "theoretical" complementarity between EfCP and other EU funding programmes with similar objectives is confirmed by the evaluation, it was difficult to identify a structured approach conducive to the development of synergies between them. However, there are informal synergies which are being exploited in practice.

There is evidence to conclude that there are natural synergies between Erasmus+ and Creative Europe with the EfCP in practice.

Indeed, we found that at national level, there was often a view that there are natural synergies in communication and peer support enhanced by the close ties occasionally developed by staff of the National Erasmus+ Agencies and the NCPs of EfCP, notably when they are hosted in the same entity (for instance, in Finland). Our research also found that NCPs and Creative Europe Desks (CEDs)[119] help each other in communication activities, for example, through mutual planning and events, potentially enabling both to gain new applicants. Such synergies between these EU funding programmes lead to significant (mutual) benefits as the collaboration between NCPs and CEDs has multiplier benefits in communication and customer service. It is also a source of peer support and assistance in the review of grant applications, making it easier to give advice to applicants. In addition, these synergies between EfCP, Erasmus+ and Creative Europe allow for economies of scale, for instance by organising joint events at several EU programmes are presented, allowing potential applicants to compare the opportunities they offer and choose the most suitable to their needs. Such activities are also beneficial as they present a coherent image of interventions with similar objectives, while enabling each Programme to maximise the reach of its particular focus.

The European Parliament has also identified this as an area where there are synergies worth exploiting more in its Resolution on the implementation of the EfCP 2014-2020 of 2 March 2017, which suggested the possibility of maximising the potential of the NCPs through an exchange of experience with entities responsible for similar projects, such as Erasmus+ and Creative Europe should be explored, and encouraged EACEA to facilitate and boost, wherever possible, synergies across EU programmes, such as Creative Europe and Erasmus+, in order to improve their impact.

There is not such strong evidence of these synergies being maximised at EU level, as it appears that there is room for improvement in cooperation between the DGs responsible for these funding programmes. Nevertheless, there are positive exceptions and we have identified instances of beneficial collaboration such as the fact that DG HOME, DG JUST, DG EAC and DG COMM are members of inter-service groups on topics of common interest, which facilitates communication and mutual understanding, and potentially – alignment of policy priorities.

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[119] Similarly to the NCPs in the EfCP, the CEDs are in place in every participating country to answer questions, provide assistance related to the programme and help cooperation of applicants with organisations in other countries.

Our research could not ascertain whether the absence of concrete synergies is a result of insufficient communication between DGs targeting similar policy objectives and target audiences, which was identified as a potential challenge in the ex-post evaluation of the 2007 – 2013 programme[63]. On the other hand, our analysis indicates that, for instance, DG HOME is communicating successfully with DG EAC in the context of the European Year of Cultural Heritage and has recently initiated the creation of synergies with EfCP. We find that there is further potential for more to be gained for all through increased collaboration and the regular sharing of successful approaches.

The **ex-post evaluation of the 2007 – 2013 programme** recommended maximising synergies by intensifying consultation with other DGs, notably through the establishment of more formal links with larger programmes that fund projects in the same policy areas[63].

At mid-term, there was not enough evidence to conclude that this recommendation has been fully implemented at this stage despite the good practices highlighted in the previous paragraph.

> The EfCP is complementary with other EU funding programmes in the field of EU citizenship, education and culture. There is evidence of limited direct overlap between them and the EfCP in terms of content, objectives and target groups. However, the EfCP has a unique programme offer and reaches beyond the target groups it shares with these other funding programmes in the field of citizenship, education and culture, through the provision of a broad range of activities accessible to the EU citizens at large.
>
> Some synergies between these programmes are being exploited on the ground, notably through the informal cooperation of national structures such as NCPs, the Creative Europe Desks and Erasmus+ National Agencies which occurs occasionally. However, the potential for complementarity and synergies is not yet maximised either at national or EU level, which hinders the gain of mutual benefits between these EU funding programmes.

4.4.2. Complementarity and synergies between EfCP and other EU instruments

This section answers the following evaluation question:

- *How well did the EfCP programme work together with other EU instruments, in particular in the area of education, vocational training and youth (including voluntary service), sport, culture, fundamental rights, social inclusion, gender equality, combating discrimination, research and innovation, information society, enlargement and the external action of the Union?*

In addition to the EU funding programmes discussed in the previous section, complementarity and synergies can be noted with other EU policy instruments. We draw a distinction here between the specific funding instruments discussed in the preceding section and the wider EU policy context around the following main themes:

- EU initiatives dedicated to increasing EU citizen participation in civil society and providing them with information;
- Volunteering; and
- Research and innovation.

EU initiatives dedicated to increasing EU citizen participation in civil society and providing them with information

In the wider policy context, promoting active citizenship across the EU is one of the European Commission's strategies for increasing social cohesion and reducing the democratic deficit across Europe. Since 2010, the European Commission has published the **European Citizenship Report**[120] every three years, thus "demonstrating the EU's continuous commitment and outreach to its citizens, while taking stock of progress made in EU citizenship policies and reflecting on future action to strengthen citizenship". Recent years have seen an increase in European Commission activities aimed at enhancing citizens' participation in the development of such initiatives, for instance the *Hearing on EU Citizenship in practice: our common values, rights and democratic participation* jointly organised by the European Commission and European Parliament in March 2016 or the public consultation to gather citizens' experience and their ideas on EU citizenship launched in September 2015. Both of these actions were designed to feed the latest EU Citizenship Report, released in January 2017.[121]

This report sets out the action undertaken to date, as well as outlines what the European Commission plans to do to promote and strengthen EU citizenship. On the basis of the feedback from citizens, the 2017 EU Citizenship Report notes that the EC intends to focus its actions on EU citizenship around four core themes. Two of these themes ("Promoting EU citizenship rights and EU common values" and "Promoting and enhancing citizens' participation in the democratic life of the EU") are directly reflected in EfCP's general and specific objectives. The EfCP is also directly referenced in the foreword by the European Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship, as having a "pivotal role in the EU's efforts to develop citizens' better understanding and more active interest and involvement in the EU policy making process."

The EfCP contributes to the promotion of and strengthening of EU common values, such as the respect for human dignity, equality and human rights, and inclusion, tolerance and respect for diversity. For instance, a civil society project funded in 2016 (*Prisoners: Present Discussion and Contribution to the Future European Union*, coordinated by Novi Homines) aimed to change the public attitude towards prisoners by promoting tolerance and enhancing the participation of prisoners and ex-convicts in civil society. The project resulted in an advancement of the dialogue between the general public and prisoners about current problems, achievements and future vision of the EU in the Member State where it was carried out. Another case study example illustrating the EfCP's coherence with the priorities of the

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[120] For more information, please see http://ec.europa.eu/justice/citizen/.
[121] See the press release and links to Report at: http://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/just/item-detail.cfm?item_id=51132.

2017 Citizenship Report aimed to inform young people in rural areas on volunteering by sharing the experience of voluntary organisations at European level, as well as furthering the debate on European civic participation policies and opportunities for young people (*YesEuropa: young volunteers changing Europe*, coordinated by the organisation Building Bridges). This project's results sit well with the spirit behind the adoption of the Paris Declaration of March 2015 on Promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education.[122]

Promoting and enhancing citizens' participation in the democratic life of the EU is at the heart of the EfCP. This objective was present in all projects reviewed in Strand 2 on democratic engagement and civic participation, but was particularly evident in the results achieved by a project which culminated in the organisation of a European e-Participation Day in 12 countries in 2015 (*E-UROPa Enabling European e-Participation*, coordinated by Telecentre-Europe AISBL), thus engaging over 1 600 direct participants and raising awareness on this state-of-the-art angle on active citizenship.

In the light of this, it can be argued that the EfCP is aligned with the wider policy context and could even be considered as an important element of the policy landscape of EU citizenship. In order to better reflect the policy priorities set out in the 2017 Citizenship Report, in a strategic interview with a European Commission official carried out for the evaluation, it was suggested to us that the time frames be aligned between the evaluations of the EfCP and the Citizenship Report, which is published every three years. This was suggested as a means of ensuring alignment of the priorities and objectives of EfCP with the EU citizenship policy priorities outlined in the Citizenship Report.

Looking at the big picture, the EfCP can play an important role at the level of citizens in alleviating what the White Paper on the future of Europe[123] sees as one of the key drivers for Europe's future – the questioning of legitimacy, reflected in the consistent decrease in the trust EU citizens have in the EU. The White Paper identifies a challenge in the perceived gap between the EU's promise and delivery, and partly attributes it to the complexity of the EU as a construct which further removes it from the ordinary citizen. Through its objectives and activities (in particular related to enhancing the citizens' understanding of the Union policy-making process), the EfCP has the potential to relay the explanation about the EU's positive role in daily life to citizens and make it visible locally. Thus, we can say that EfCP fits well with these overarching issues and priorities for the future of Europe.

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[122] Informal meeting of the EU's Education Ministers in Paris, declaration on Promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education; 17 March 2015. Available at http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/repository/education/news/2015/documents/citizenship-education-declaration_en.pdf.

[123] White Paper on the future of Europe - Reflections and scenarios for the EU27 by 2025; European Commission; COM(2017)2025 of 1 March 2017, p. 12. Available at https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/white_paper_on_the_future_of_europe_en.pdf.

The **EU Citizenship Portal**[124] is a dissemination tool developed through the Horizontal Action of the EfCP in 2014 and is managed by DG HOME's Unit A1 on Interinstitutional relations and Citizenship. It is a one-stop shop for the different aspects and policies related to EU Citizenship. The portal offers information about issues related to EU citizenship, mainly focusing on two aspects: (i) the rights as a citizen of an EU Member State and (ii) ways to get involved in European politics and shape the EU's political agenda. It also provides a link to the Europe for Citizens' website.

The Portal has a section dedicated to the practical aspects of the EU citizens' lives and links to information and assistance services, such as the **Your Europe**[125] website (informing citizens about their rights while moving around Europe and providing practical tips), the **Europe Direct Contact Centre**[126] (for general questions on the EU), as well as a number of specialised websites for finding work abroad or handling consumer complaints for instance.

Another section of the Portal focuses on promoting the ways in which citizens can participate in the debate on the future of Europe and includes links to a number of initiatives. Pioneering direct democracy in the EU, the use of **the European Citizens' Initiative**[127] (ECI) allows one million EU citizens from at least seven EU countries to call on the European Commission to propose legislation on matters where the EU has competence to legislate. **Citizens' Dialogues** are organised across the EU and consist of "town hall"-style meetings during which members of the European Commission listen to and debate directly with citizens about EU policies. The 2017 EU Citizenship Report refers to the EC's plans to intensify Citizens' Dialogues and encourage public debate, to improve public understanding of the impact of the EU on citizens' daily lives and to encourage an exchange of views with citizens. **Your Voice in Europe**[128] encourages citizens to engage with the EU law making process. Finally, the **Transparency Register**[129] grants EU citizens transparent and open access to the EU decision-making process so as to encourage them to participate more actively in the democratic life of the EU.

These initiatives referenced on the Portal serve a dual purpose – informing citizens of their rights stemming from the membership of their home country in the EU and informing them on the pathways to civic engagement. Through its objective of fostering European citizenship and improving conditions for civic and democratic participation at Union level, the EfCP has a close relationship with these initiatives which enable citizens to realise this engagement in practice.

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[124] http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/
[125] http://europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/index_en.htm
[126] https://europa.eu/european-union/contact_en
[127] Guide to the European citizens' initiative, 3rd Ed (European Commission, 2015); Regulation (EU) No 211/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 February 2011 on the citizens' initiative.
[128] http://ec.europa.eu/info/law/contribute-law-making_en.
[129] http://ec.europa.eu/transparencyregister/public/homePage.do.

In its Resolution[130] on the implementation of the EfCP 2014-2020 from 2 March 2017, the European Parliament notes that the EfCP can contribute to raising awareness on the existing channels of direct participation in the EU discussed above, in order to enhance citizens' knowledge on the opportunities for direct participation within the EU's institutional framework. We concur that the possibilities of further enhancing the synergies between the EfCP and these tools of citizen participation in democratic life can be further explored to achieve maximum impact of the EU's policy priorities on citizenship and democratic participation.

Volunteering

Volunteering is perceived as an essential element in active citizenship, as it is one of the practical realisations of taking a role in active role in society, by contributing to local communities at home or abroad. Volunteering can influence one's sense of belonging to a community and contribute to the development of citizens' commitment to their society and political life. Volunteering is presented as one of the means that can contribute to the attainment of the EfCP's specific objective to "encourage the democratic and civic participation of citizens at Union level", as the Programme aims to "promote opportunities for societal and intercultural engagement and volunteering at Union level."

There are three main existing EU initiatives in the field of volunteering. The **European Voluntary Service** offers opportunities to volunteer in another country in Europe or elsewhere in the world and is open to all young people aged 18-30.[131] The **EU Aid Volunteers** programme[132] provides "practical support to humanitarian aid projects and contributing to strengthening the local capacity and resilience of disaster-affected communities" by bringing together volunteers and organisations from different countries. The EfCP connects to these volunteering activities as they contribute to strengthening social cohesion and active citizenship, but also because they translate EU values into practice by developing solidarity, mutual understanding and tolerance. They are also both linked on the EU Citizenship Portal, which is a one-stop-shop for individuals seeking to learn about their rights stemming from EU citizenship, as well as the ways to get involved in European politics and shape the EU's political agenda.

The complementarity and synergies between EfCP and volunteering activities at EU level has been reinforced by the setting up of the **European Solidarity Corps**[133], a fairly recent EU initiative[134], "rooted in the core EU values of engagement and solidarity." Announced by the President of the European Commission in the State of the Union speech of 14 September

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

[131] For more information, please see https://ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/youth-strategy/voluntary-activities_en.

[132] For more information, please see http://ec.europa.eu/echo/what/humanitarian-aid/eu-aid-volunteers_en.

[133] For more information, please see https://europa.eu/youth/solidarity/mission_en.

[134] In his State of the Union speech of 14 September 2016, the President of the European Commission announced the setting up of a European Solidarity Corps with the aim to give young people across the EU the opportunity to volunteer where help is needed and to respond to crisis situations.

2016[135], the aim of the European Solidarity Corps is *"to give young people across the EU the opportunity to volunteer where help is needed and to respond to crisis situations"*. Available to young people aged between 17 and 30 years at the time of registration, the European Solidarity Corps will give opportunity to participants to join a wide range of projects, such as assisting in centres for asylum seekers, or addressing different social issues in communities.

The latest EfCP Programme guide from 2017[136] builds on previous references to volunteering as an essential element of active citizenship and foresees that particular attention should be paid to the promotion of volunteering in the context of the EfCP, in particular through the European Solidarity Corps. In practice, this means that the European Solidarity Corps will build in a first step on existing EU programmes and EfCP project promoters are encouraged to make use of the European Solidarity Corps. While our understanding is that this express reference in the EfCP documentation encourages coherence, insights from the focus groups with NCPs and the workshop with CDG members indicated that it is not totally clear (to both potential beneficiaries and stakeholders) how the European Solidarity Corps fits with the EfCP's objectives and what potential synergies could be developed in practice.

The strategic interviews emphasised the synergies between EfCP and volunteering, particularly in light of the recommendation to project managers to use the European Solidarity Corps. As this initiative is not fully fledged yet, it is too early to say if it will give rise to a meaningful connection between the two actions. Nevertheless, the potential for synergies exists.

Youth

The EfCP is important for the EU's action in the field of youth, as one of its key target groups is young people and it supports a large number of projects involving organisations working with young people. The Regulation establishing the Programme for 2014 – 2020 highlights the importance of promoting "reflection on, defining moments in European history, initiatives to make European citizens, particularly young people", but also that there is a need to increase efforts to enhance the democratic participation of young people. Thus, both Programme Strands have activities suited to reach young people.

The EfCP is an important contributor to youth participation in democratic life, as also stated in the **2015 EU Youth Report**.[137] The Report also references a number of innovative youth projects funded by the EfCP in 2014 and 2015. The feedback from both the CDG and NCPs corroborated this finding as it emphasised that the EfCP is instrumental in supporting the civic engagement of young people and that one of the key target groups of EfCP is young people through youth organisations receiving action and Operating Grants from the EfCP.

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[135] Press release available at http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-4252_en.htm.
[136] Europe for Citizens - Programme guide - version valid as of 2017
[137] Available at https://ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/implementation/report_en.

Research and innovation

Science and technology have a strong influence on the future of the EU, as Research and Innovation (R&I) is at the heart of EU policy. Having a discussion on and anticipating societal impacts of EU policy in this area is essential to ensure trust among citizens. The European Commission President emphasised the need to deepen dialogue between society and European institutions in his political guidelines for the present Commission[138], by stating that "the social market economy can only work if there is social dialogue."

In the field of R&I, the Commission promotes an approach to involve all societal actors (researchers, citizens, policy makers, businesses, civil society organisations, etc.) and "encourage them to work together, with the aim to better align research and innovation outcomes with societal values needs and aspirations."[139] This approach has been branded as the **Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI).** In practice, this approach translates in initiatives aiming to involve the society at large in R&I activities.

For instance, RRI supports **public engagement in R&I** through the establishment of participatory multi-actor dialogues and exchanges to foster mutual understanding, which contribute to policy agendas. Bringing on-board the broadest possible range of actors (such as researchers, policy makers, industry and civil society organisations and NGO, and citizens) to deliberate on matters of science and technology supports the development of creative approaches to knowledge, but also taking into account a broader range of societal needs and perspectives in the development of R&I policy.

In addition, the RRI package enables **easier access to scientific results by citizens and a better inclusion of gender and ethics dimensions in R&I content**. An initiative addressed to citizens supports the development of a better understanding of the EU's policy processes are the **Citizens summaries**.[140] Aimed at citizens who want to learn more about European Commission initiatives, but are finding the information challenging to understand, these summaries provide "a simple, clear explanation of what is being proposed." In other words, they summarise complicated policy initiatives in layman's terms, making them understandable to citizens with no specific background knowledge on the subject matter.

Horizon 2020 is the EU's Framework Programme for Research and Innovation. Its section **Science with and for society** has the specific objective of building effective cooperation between science and society, to recruit new talent for science and to pair scientific excellence with social awareness and responsibility. The idea is to encourage dialogue between scientists and other members of the public, by promoting an adherence to ethical standards, and by developing better access to the results of research, as explained above.

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[138] A New Start for Europe: My Agenda for Jobs, Growth, Fairness and Democratic Change Political Guidelines for the next European Commission Opening Statement in the European Parliament Plenary Session; Strasbourg, 22 October 2014. Available at https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/juncker-political-guidelines-speech_en_0.pdf.

[139] For more information, please visit http://ec.europa.eu/research/swafs/index.cfm?pg=about.

[140] Accessible at http://ec.europa.eu/research/index.cfm?pg=citizen_summaries.

The preceding paragraphs show how RRI seeks to engage citizens in the development of R&I policy and has the potential to contribute to citizens' understanding of the Union and its policy making processes in the field of R&I, notably through the provision of information content understandable by all. This shows that the EfCP and these initiatives are complementary. However, our research did not identify any explicit exploitation of the potential synergies, which do in fact appear to exist.

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

There are apparent synergies between the objective of the EfCP to encourage civic participation and the tools that enable citizens to realise their engagement in a practical way, potentially resulting in the realisation of active citizenship. Synergies also exist between the EfCP and volunteering initiatives at EU level, and have been reinforced by the recent referencing of the European Solidarity Corps in the EfCP documentation. However, given that the European Solidarity Corps initiative has only been launched recently, these synergies are not yet optimised.

Unexploited synergies also exists in relation to other key policies, including youth policy, as well as research and innovation. Such synergies could enhance the EfCP's impact and contribute to the achievement of the political priorities set out in the 2017 Citizenship Report and the White Paper on the future of Europe but are not yet sufficiently defined in practice.

4.4.3. Consistency, synergies and cooperation between Strand 1 and Strand 2

This section answers the following evaluation question:

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

By way of background, Strand 1 on European Remembrance supports activities that encourage "reflection on European cultural diversity and on common values in the broadest sense" and Strand 2 on Democratic engagement and civic participation supports "activities that cover civic participation in the broadest sense", and may also "cover projects and initiatives that develop opportunities for mutual understanding, intercultural dialogue, solidarity, societal engagement and volunteering at Union level."

The synergies between Strand 1 and Strand 2 are not a requirement in project development outlined in the programme documentation. Thus the projects rarely focus on establishing strong links between the two Strands. The only reference in the Programme Guide that could be interpreted as linking Strand 1 and 2 is in the specific criteria for selection of projects under Strand 1. There, the Programme guide notes that preference will be given to "actions which

encourage tolerance, mutual understanding, intercultural dialogue and reconciliation as a means of moving beyond the past and building the future, in particular with a view to reaching the younger generation." However, there is no obvious link with the objective of fostering European citizenship and to improving conditions for civic and democratic participation at Union level. We note that there is no concrete reference in programme documentation on linking the past and the future in project proposals, which makes it difficult to expect that applicants will pursue such linkages by themselves.

The consultations with programme actors (Programme Committee and NCPs) revealed a shared agreement that the objectives of the two programme strands are complementary and mutually supportive as both aim to bring citizens closer to the EU, so it makes sense for them to be included in the same framework. The majority of Programme stakeholders (members of the CDG who were consulted and organisations contributing to the public consultation) also agree on the importance of both strands of the programme and perceive positively the fact that the EfCP deals with both the past and lessons learnt (Strand 1) as well as the present and the future (Strand 2). However, isolated comments suggest that a small group of stakeholders have doubts about the relationship between the two themes and whether they belong in the same policy framework. This view was not widely shared and may reflect the heterogeneity of the Programme's stakeholder base. The beneficiaries of the two Strands operate in different contexts and may not necessarily see the connection between the two.

There is also a broad consensus among the institutional actors and stakeholders consulted that both strands are equally important in light of the objectives of the EfCP and the current structure of the programme achieves a balance between past and present. The two aspects are very closely linked and the lessons learned from the past are an essential part on a healthy debate on the future of the EU. This relationship was presented by many as a "natural connection" which exists between EU Remembrance and active European citizenship, reflected in the premise that in order to bring Europe closer to its citizens and to enable them to participate fully in the construction of an ever closer Union, citizens (in particular young people) should be made aware of the history of the Union and of the functioning of the Union institutions in the first place. Thus, participation in activities focused on raising awareness on the common history and values of the Union and the Union's aim naturally contribute to laying a foundation for enhanced civic participation. This was evident in case studies on selected projects considered in the context of the mid-term evaluation.

The Programme in practice - 4

In most Strand 1 projects reviewed for the case studies, the fostering of European citizenship was implied through the learning and understanding of the links between Europe's past, present and future. A particularly striking example to illustrate this point was a Remembrance project funded in 2016 (*Inspired by the memory,* coordinated by Fundacja Centrum Edukacji Obywatelskiej) and aimed at stimulating the debate among young people about the victims of totalitarian regimes, the World War II history and its impact on the current shape of Europe. The project set out to raise historical awareness among young people and promote modern historical education through the use of film. This project not only successfully brought together peers from different countries in the context of Remembrance, but also made them

more aware of their European citizenship and less limited to national narratives. This thus enhanced their perception of the current political debates in the EU. Another Remembrance project (*SMILE (Sharing Messina Ideal, a Lesson for all Europe)* and coordinated by the Consiglio Italiano del Movimento Europeo, already discussed in section 4.2.2) commemorated the 60th anniversary of the Messina Conference, a landmark event that gave momentum to EU integration. The underlying concept advanced by project promoters was to use this opportunity to explain to citizens that integration is the only possible solution to facing all major challenges that threaten the EU now and in the future.

A review of the case studies on Strand 2 projects indicated that some of them had potential results in raising awareness of European remembrance, and Europe's shared history and values. Understandably, projects from Strand 2 are anchored in the present and often deal with concrete issues rather than an intellectual reflection. This is also one of the strengths of the EfCP in attempting to bridge the gap between the EU and citizens by engaging them with issues that are of interest to them and that they understand. Thus, the references to Europe's common past as an explanation of the current underlying EU shared values are more subtle. They are nevertheless occasionally present, as for instance in a Town-Twinning project between the municipalities of *San Bartolomé de las Abiertas (Spain) and Lavernose-Lacasse (France)* with the main objective of bringing EU citizens from two different municipalities together to foster a sense of belonging and increase the sense of European citizenship and active participation. One of the reasons put forward by the Spanish municipality on the choice of its twinning partner was that a large number of citizens from the country had taken refuge in this French municipality during the Spanish Civil War.

The **ex-post evaluation of the 2007 – 2013** recommended that the remembrance projects be encouraged to look more towards the future, as the case studies for the programming period had shown that remembrance projects tended to be more salient when they considered practical implications for the present and future, in addition to the past. The recommendation was that the Commission should encourage potential participants to demonstrate such links in funding applications and take them into account as part of the scoring process, as this would allow the programme to continue to preserve the memory of Europe's past while applying lessons learned to the issues facing citizens today[63].

The evidence collected in the present evaluation concludes that the relationship between both strands is, however, still not being exploited to its full potential.

Although synergies between Strand 1 and Strand 2 are not a requirement under the EfCP, the experience of the EfCP suggests that in practice the two strands are consistent and can be mutually supportive, on the basis of the natural connection between lessons learned from the past and plans made for the future of Europe.

The case studies indicated that project results occasionally link the two Strands through the finding that the fostering of European citizenship is often implicated through the learning and understanding of the links between Europe's past, present and future in Strand 1

projects, whereas some Strand 2 projects implicitly raise awareness on Europe's shared history and values through the reflection on its future.

However, the evidence collected in the present evaluation shows that the relationship between both strands is still not being exploited to its full potential.

4.5. EU Added value

EU added value "looks for changes which it can reasonably be argued are due to EU intervention, rather than any other factors"[141]. In our assessment, we bring together the findings of other evaluation criteria and consider whether any other initiatives at national or regional level could have achieved the same result in order to answer the evaluation questions:

- *What is the EU added value of the EfCP in terms of complementing national / regional initiatives and achieving results that would not have been possible through other means?*
- *What would be the most likely consequences of stopping the Europe for Citizens Programme?*

As these questions are so closely linked, we have provided a single response and set of conclusions.

It is of course challenging to identify changes as a result of this intervention. As demonstrated in **effectiveness**, the objectives do not lend themselves to easy measurement of results. It is also important, as pointed out elsewhere, to recognise that external factors are also at play and their influence cannot be measured. The aggregate view from the answers to the evaluation questions must serve as a proxy for assessing the EU added value of the programme.

As a first step, it is important to look at whether the **basic premise on the EU added value of the Programme** still holds true and whether the assessment that only an EU intervention can address the problem (the subsidiarity test) remains valid.

4.5.1. The basic premises of the Programme

The Impact Assessment[55] pointed out that "there is no single solution with a view to bridge the gap between the EU and its citizens, to the lack of participation and to the limited development of a sense of belonging and of European identity. They require a variety of actions and co-ordinated efforts through transnational and European level activities".

The gap which the Impact Assessment identified that the Programme should fill is a horizontal one that complements the sectoral dialogues that the Commission has with citizens on

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[141] Better Regulation Guidelines, pg 60.

specific policies. Through its horizontal activities, the Programme prepares the ground for EU citizens and their associations to be able to participate in those dialogues in an informed way.

The answer to the Evaluation Question on coherence demonstrated the differences between these vertical dialogues and the EfCP, and the specific position filled by the EfCP in a broad landscape of funding programmes and policy instruments. The existence of scope for synergies and some clearer demarcation in some instances does not detract from the overall complementarity and uniqueness of the EfCP.

A further key step in assessing added value is whether the EU intervention passes the subsidiarity test, i.e. the problem cannot more appropriately be addressed at national or regional level. The Impact Assessment felt that this was easy to demonstrate:

- remembrance activities by definition have an EU wide-dimension;
- developing the understanding and capacity to participate in EU policy making and develop opportunities for solidarity and societal engagement are so wide in scope and ambition that they can only be addressed at Union level; and
- pan-European valorisation platforms are needed to broaden perspectives and facilitate transnational exchanges even where there is scope for dissemination of best practice at national level.

Clearly these arguments still hold good.

Moreover, stakeholders consulted in each of our data collection tools often emphasised the uniqueness of the programme, noting that **no other initiative offering funding for cross-European activities in remembrance and civic participation exists at EU level or within the Member States.**

Thus, the evidence shows that the basic premises as to where the EfCP can add value relative to activities of Member States at national or regional level in this area (to the extent that there is any) remain valid, as do the assumptions as to where an EfCP adds value relative to other EU funding programmes.

4.5.2. The quantitative evidence

There is quantitative evidence of added value in the **number of applications** submitted versus the number of grants allocated and information on the lack of similar funding at national or regional level. In our web-based survey, beneficiaries who had received **local, regional or national funding** for citizenship activities were in a clear minority, while funding for remembrance activities is even harder to come by, as the figure shows.

Figure 23: Proportion of EfCP beneficiaries having received funding at national, regional or local level for citizenship and remembrance activities (n=27)
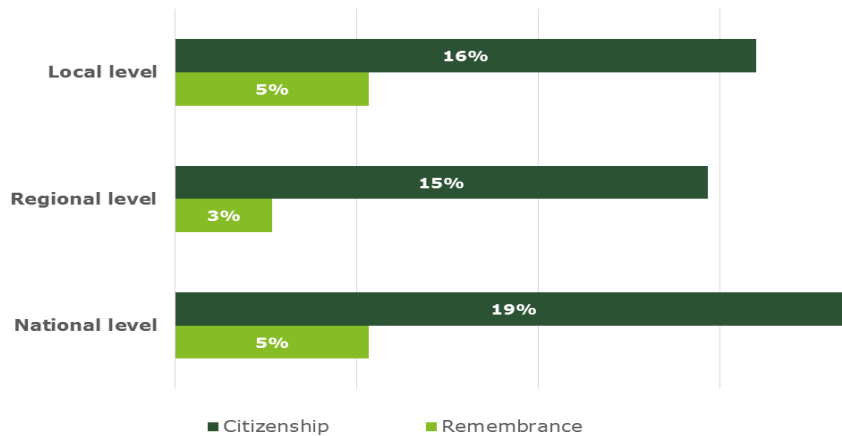
Source: Survey to EfCP beneficiaries

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

The **level of reliance of beneficiaries on EfCP funding** is also an important indicator of the programmes added value in the EU. When asked about the possibility of not receiving funding under the programme, the majority of beneficiaries responding to our survey indicated that they would find it "difficult" (31% of 75 respondents) or "very difficult" (32% of 75 respondents) to remain operational without the funding from the EfCP.

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

Furthermore, all project managers interviewed in the **case study** exercise stressed their level of reliance on the EfCP funding and mentioned that their projects would not have been carried out had they not received a grant.

4.5.3. The qualitative evidence

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

Taking the evidence from the answers to the evaluation questions, in addition to the evidence on coherence discussed above and in relation to the basic premises of the Programme, there is clear evidence of added value, starting with **relevance**, where the importance of **the promotion of civic engagement** in the current challenging times for the EU was unquestioned.

Results on **effectiveness** show that projects are perceived to have had a positive and sustainable impact on the target groups with participants finding their experience memorable and subsequently sharing knowledge with others. In addition, these impacts are strengthened by the face-to-face interaction of participants, which is a key feature of the programme, certainly bringing additional added value. This effectiveness at activity level feeds the aggregate picture of added value.

With regards to **efficiency**, it is clear that the budget does not allow for the full realisation of objectives. However, the programme is deemed to have provided significant value for the money spent. Case studies and beneficiary feedback indicate that the results of individual projects exceed initial expectations. We have heard no suggestions that the added value was anything other than proportionate to the investment made; on the contrary.

As demonstrated by our assessment of coherence, the Programme is **complementary** to a number of other EU initiatives, in particular to the **ECI** and the newly established **European Solidarity Corps**. The complementarity of the EfCP with the **Citizenship Report**[142] is also important, as the programme offers a solution to meeting the aims of promoting awareness of citizens' rights and strengthening common values. In particular, the EfCP provides a mechanism for enhancing citizens' participation in the democratic life of the EU through Civil Society Projects that educate and raise awareness among citizens on EU policy, the

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

democratic process[143] and existing channels of direct participation that exist in the EU[144]. It is also the assessment of the **European Parliament**, that the EfCP has "played a valuable part in different policy areas, including justice, freedom and security, migration, employment and social policy, as well as education, training and youth"[145].

> The EfCP still meets the **added value tests** set for it at the outset in terms of the gap it is intended to fill as a horizontal pathway to dialogue on informed sectoral dialogue on policy areas of interest to citizens and in addressing needs that only an EU intervention can address.
>
> It demonstrates **clear added value** at the EU level both in the aggregate effect of its impact on participants and its complementarity with other EU funding instruments and policy initiatives.
>
> Importantly, there is very strong evidence that the Programme is overall **unique** given that funding at national or regional level to achieve the same or similar objectives is at best very limited. Stakeholders' limited or inability to conduct similar projects without the support of the EfCP also highlights the level of reliance of beneficiaries on the programme.
>
> There is a demonstrated need for EU action in the area of remembrance and civil society and **the positive impacts achieved by the programme are not likely to be attained by other means should it not be continued**.

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[143] As mentioned in Section 3 of the Citizenship Report 2017.
[144] Discussed in more detail in the "Coherence" criterion.
[145] Draft Report on the implementation of Council Regulation (EU) No 390/2014 of 14 April 2014 establishing the 'Europe for Citizens' programme for the period 2014–2020 (2015/2329(INI)) Committee on Culture and Education, p 6.

5.Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1. Conclusions

The Conclusions below and the Recommendations which follow are the result of our extensive research from various sources – desk research, interviews and/or focus groups with senior officials, national contact points, civil society, case studies, a web-based survey and a public consultation, and the conclusions of the previous evaluation. The triangulation of this data has lead us to the answers to the Evaluation Questions. .

5.1.1. Relevance

The European for Citizens Programme 2014-2020 was proposed in 2012 to address **a crisis of confidence and limited trust in the EU institutions**, which had been exacerbated by the economic and financial crisis. The need to inspire a greater sense of belonging to the European Union and understand the achievements of European integration was a driver of the Programme. These challenges remain as the *White Paper on the Future of Europe* has identified: "…many Europeans consider the Union as either too distant or too interfering in their day-to-day lives. Others question its added-value and ask how Europe improves their standard of living. And for too many, the EU fell short of their expectations as it struggled with its worst financial, economic and social crisis in post-war history. Europe's challenges show no sign of abating"[146].

Thus **the objectives** of the programme, i.e. to contribute to citizens' understanding of the Union, its shared history and diversity on the one hand, and to foster European citizenship and improve conditions for civic and democratic participation at the Union level, on the other, **were and remain relevant** to the problems to be addressed since the needs it was designed to contribute to addressing are still relevant.

Given the arguably unprecedented challenges faced by the EU at present, it is evident that there is still an important need to enhance citizens' understanding of the EU, its history and diversity as well as encourage debate and reflection on citizens' understanding of the EU.

What is true overall is also true of the activities within the two strands of the Programme: remembrance and civic participation. Activities under both contribute to the two specific objectives of the Programme, i.e. to raise awareness of remembrance, the common history and values of the Union and the Union's aim, namely to promote peace, the values of the Union and the well-being of its peoples, by stimulating debate, reflection and the development of networks, and to encourage the democratic and civic participation of citizens

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[146] https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/white_paper_on_the_future_of_europe_en.pdf, pg 6.

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

Together, the activities under both strands can provide **a continuum for understanding the past, present and future**, how they relate to each other, and the role European integration has played and is playing in shaping them.

However, the degree to which the activities are relevant for contributing to the programme objectives **differs among the measures**. Some activities, namely remembrance and civil society projects, are directly relevant to the overall objectives since they focus on improving citizens' awareness of Union history and directly involving citizens in civic and democratic participation. The relevance of some town networks and town twinning activities to the specific objectives is less certain at the level of specific activities, but the concepts as such are relevant when implemented effectively.

5.1.2. Effectiveness & Sustainability

In terms of outcomes, the Programme has been effective in meeting targets on the quantity and quality of applications, the number of citizens reached directly and indirectly, and diversification of beneficiaries, albeit formulating a judgement is hampered by gaps in the monitoring data and the overlaps between the Impact Indicators of the Impact Assessment and the performance indicators in the Regulation.

Taking this evidence with the evidence collected from stakeholders, it is possible to conclude that the Programme has been **effective in achieving its objectives and** that the activities undertaken have contributed to the enhancement of civic participation and the overall debate on the past, present and future of the EU. The way in which individual citizens are involved in the activities is one of the Programme's strengths.

The broad definition of eligibility for town twinning is a weakness. With so many applicants relative to the number of successful applications, there is a case for ensuring both that the preference for an EU dimension be strengthened in order to ensure these activities contribute to fulfilling the objectives of the Programme and that they build in sustainable outcomes. The one-off nature of town twinning activities means in many cases that the outcomes are unlikely to be lasting, which makes these activities less effective than the Networks of Towns.

There is a need to investigate how it would be possible to improve the geographical balance of Town-Twinning projects. Four countries consistently dominate the selection of Town-Twinning projects. Ways have to be found to encourage towns from other countries to engage with Town-Twinning.

Dissemination activities (high-profile events, development of an online database for project results, maintenance of a programme website) **have individually been effective** in contributing to raising awareness about the programme, but there is scope for a more strategic approach based on an overarching communication and dissemination strategy.

The principle of **using NCPs** to disseminate information and assist potential applicants **is sound** and working well taken overall, but a formal evaluation of the NCPs would assist the Commission in better defining their role. Dialogue with both NCPs and the Civil Dialogue Group shows room for improvement.

At the mid- term of the programming period, the Programme has overall the potential to deliver **sustainable outcomes** in relation to the Programme's objectives.

5.1.3. Efficiency

The funds are being disbursed at an even rate and broadly in line with an even spread over the seven years of the programme. This is helpful both to those administering the programme and the beneficiaries. Individual activities are providing value for money and the amounts are **proportionate** to the ambitions of the beneficiaries and cost-effective in fulfilling the objectives of the Programme through the type of beneficiary and activity they fund.

The current structure of the EfCP, with **the two strands and a Horizontal Action is working satisfactorily**, but there could be greater clarity about whether the strands are truly stand-alone or a relationship is intended in order to establish a continuum between past, present and future.

Both **Action and Operating Grants** are being disbursed and utilised efficiently for the separate functions they fulfil and in pursuit of the Programme's objectives.Results produced via Operating Grants seem to be more efficient, thanks to the nature and the profile of beneficiaries but also thanks to the multiannual framework which now allows long-term conceptualisation and implementation of activities, compared to the shorter term projects implemented under Action Grants. . Providing funding via lump sums particularly suits the Action Grants, although three years' experience of the system has demonstrated the need to review whether variations in costs of living and travel could be better taken into account within the overall budget without modifying this approach.

Expenditure on activities under the **Horizontal Action**, including NCPs, is also cost-effective as best can be judged from the data available, but there is scope for more transparency. This applies both to the selection process and the dissemination activities run at central level. The absence of a centrally established framework for dissemination and communication activities is inimical to efficiency (and effectiveness). Ten years after the funding mechanism for NCPs was set is an appropriate time to review the role of NCPs and this funding mechanism in anticipation of the next Programme.

The **simplification** carried out over the last two years has been a major, and beneficial, leap forward, with only some fine-tuning possibly required to the final report format and procedures for re-applying for Operating Grants.

The **monitoring process** needs reviewing in the interests of both Effectiveness and Efficiency to define baselines, choose workable indicators, which leave room for qualitative assessment in addition to numerical reporting, and simplify the process overall. At the same time, opportunities need to be found to engage policymakers with the project results.

Since this evaluation study is a mid-term assessment, comparison to the **previous programming period** to draw robust conclusions on the efficiency of the Programme is not permitted at this stage.

5.1.4. Complementarity and Synergies

The EfCP complements other EU funding programmes in the field of EU citizenship, education and culture. The EfCP is also coherent with EU policies and tools dedicated to increasing EU citizen participation in civil society and providing them with information, as well as with other instruments in the areas of volunteering, youth, and research and innovation.

There is some evidence of **limited direct overlap** between the EfCP and other funding programmes, notably Erasmus+ and Creative Europe's Culture sub-programme in terms of content, objectives and target groups. Nevertheless, the EfCP has a unique programme offer and reaches beyond the target groups it shares with these other funding programmes through the potential of a broad range of activities for all citizens, including the most disadvantaged.

The complementarity does not mean that there is no **scope for synergies**. Indeed, some are already being exploited on the ground, notably through the informal cooperation of national structures such as National Contact Points, Creative Europe Desks and Erasmus+ National Agencies. However, the potential for this has not yet been maximised based on a shared understanding of the business case for this and an example set at the level of the parent Directorates-General (DG) across all relevant areas of activity and policy. This is despite some recent moves towards closer cooperation at DG level.

Given that the European Solidarity Corps initiative has only been launched recently, the synergies with the EfCP are not yet optimised. .

Although synergies between Strand 1 and Strand 2 are not a requirement under the EfCP, **the two strands** are not only complementary but **can be mutually supportive**, on the basis of the natural connection between lessons learned from the past and plans made for the future of Europe. There are examples where this is already the case, but there is scope to do more.

5.1.5. Added value

Finally, the EfCP still meets the **added value tests** set for it at the outset in terms of the gap it is intended to fill as a horizontal pathway to informed sectoral dialogue on policy areas of interest to citizens and in addressing needs that only an EU intervention can address.

It demonstrates **clear added value** at the EU level both in the aggregate effect of its impact on participants and its complementarity with other EU funding instruments and policy initiatives.

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

There is a demonstrated need for EU action in the area of remembrance and civil society and **the positive impacts achieved by the programme are not likely to be attained by other means should it not be continued**.

5.2. Recommendations

We have formulated recommendations for two different timelines:

1. for execution within the **current programming period**; and

2. to be implemented for the **next programming period**.

5.2.1. Recommendations for the current programming period

Governance

- Establish mechanisms, with adequate administrative support, for **structured dialogue with beneficiaries, the NCPs, the Civil Dialogue Group and the European Parliament** for discussion inter alia on policy developments in the fields of democratic engagement, civic participation and citizenship, synergies with other programmes and policies, exploitation and dissemination of results, monitoring and procedures.

- **Share more information with NCPs** on good practice in applications to enable them to provide better assistance to future applicants. This should include increasing the benefits of Horizontal Action by requiring NCPs to disseminate project results (more) and therefore add to the replicability of good practices and encouraging knowledge sharing.

- Carry out **a formal evaluation of the NCP network** with a view to implementing the recommendations in the next programming period. The evaluation should look at the NCPs role in dissemination and assistance to applicants based on an assessment of needs for communication and capacity-building, at complementarity and synergies with other EU networks at national level with similar roles, use of technology and innovation to reach beneficiaries, and potential for efficiency gains.

Programme Operation

- Consider how, by modifying the Programme Guide, but without needing to modify the Regulation:
  - the preference for projects to have **an EU dimension** contained in Annex I to the Regulation be strengthened in practice in order to ensure that this is always taken into account in town twinning projects;
  - preference is given to **town twinning projects which have in-built plans for sustainable outcomes**;
  - preference is given to projects which can situate their projects on **a continuum, which recognises the link between past, present and future**, irrespective of whether they are applying for Strand 1 or 2;
  - preference is given to **projects in which citizens are active and engaged participants** rather than passive beneficiaries of an activity;

- further clarify the **synergies between the EfCP and the European Solidarity Corps** and how these will be taken into account in award criteria.

- Improve the **transparency of the selection process**, including information on the evaluation process, and the feedback per award criterion to rejected applicants.

- Review the **impact and performance monitoring indicators** of the Impact Assessment and the Regulation to establish baselines, clear targets based on existing experience of realistic outcomes, select the most appropriate indicators (in consultation with beneficiaries and NCPs) segmented by target audience and establish an online relational reporting tool which collects quantitative and qualitative data, including data from site visits and feedback surveys.

- Review in anticipation of the next Programme, the equity of the **lump sum** approach with regard to the ranges of costs of living in the participant countries and distances travelled to meet project partners. The scope for funding based on a system that uses certain levels or categories of cost could be explored

Communication/awareness-raising

- Develop **a communication strategy** for activities funded from the Horizontal Action, including those organised centrally and by the NCPs. Include strategies for identifying potential beneficiaries who could further increase the quality of applications and for making the VALOR platform more user-friendly as soon as that is technically possible.

- Consider whether there are **replicable recommendations from the forthcoming evaluation of the Dissemination and Exploitation of Erasmus+ and Creative Europe Results on the VALOR platform** commissioned by DG EAC.

- Consider whether and when there are benefits in **reaching out beyond stakeholders** (including policymakers) to the general public.

- **Improve the understanding of why applications from some countries are consistently more successful;** incorporate the lessons in the communication strategy.

- Place **greater emphasis in the selection process on dissemination of results** by beneficiaries and on sustainable outcomes.

5.2.2. Recommendations for the next programming period

- **Continue the Europe for Citizens programme.**
- **Maintain the general and specific objectives unchanged.**
- **Carry forward any improvements proposed for and implemented in the current programming period** where not overtaken by changes recommended below.
- **Implement any pending improvements proposed for the current programming period and not implemented**, embedding them in a future Regulation where desirable and where not overtaken by changes recommended below.
- Establish **more structured cooperation between EfCP, Rights, the Equality and Citizenship Programme, Creative Europe and Erasmus+** in order to facilitate dialogue on future policy developments affecting the Programme and to maximise the potential for **synergies at central and national level**, including between NCPs, Erasmus+ National Agencies and Creative Europe Desks.

- Recognising the challenges the EU faces which make the Programme arguably more relevant than ever, **increase the budget** in order to reach a larger number of citizens.
- Ensure that projects are clearly situated on **a continuum of past, present and future**, while recognising that civil society organisations specialising in Remembrance tend to be distinct from those specialising in active citizenship.
- Merge **the Town Twinning and Networks of Towns activities**, permitting Town Twinning, but giving preference to Networks of three or more towns and projects with plans for sustainability.

Annex A - The Analytical Framework

The Analytical Framework, validated by the Steering Committee during the Inception phase, was the basis of the evaluation's analysis and it was organised by evaluation criterion and divided into three main sections:

- the **evaluation questions** organised under the evaluation criteria;
- the **judgement criteria** used to answer the evaluation questions in an accurate and sound manner; and
- the (qualitative or quantitative) **indicators** used to substantiate the judgement criteria[147].

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[147] The initial version of the Analytical Framework also included the **methodological tools/sources of the information** used to analyse the collected data and feed the indicators. Yet, here we excluded this part, as during the triangulation of data, we took into account information coming from **all** possible sources.

Table 20: The Analytical Framework of the evaluation

Evaluation questions	Judgement Criteria	Indicators
Relevance		
In how far were the objectives **relevant to the problems** to be addressed?	- Confirmation that the objectives of the programme respond to the need to enhance understanding of the Union, its shared history and diversity among EU citizens; - Confirmation that the objectives of the programme respond to the need to enhance the level of civic engagement and democratic participation in Europe.	- Perception of stakeholders (e.g. local authorities, NGOs, research institutes, etc.) on the relevance of the Programme objectives to citizens understanding of the Union, its shared history and diversity. - Perception of stakeholders (i.e. towns, municipalities, Town-Twinning committees, federations and associations of local/regional authorities, NGOs, CSOs, think tanks) on the relevance of the Programme activities to **foster** European citizenship and to improve conditions for civic and democratic participation (i.e. participating citizens discuss and reflect on EU matters, engage in further civic activities, participate to European democratic life, and entice others to engage).
		- Quantitative/qualitative data on the level of attachment of citizens to the EU - Qualitative/quantitative data on the level of civic engagement in Europe. - Comparison between the needs previously identified in the Impact Assessment and the objectives of the programme as per the Regulation.
To what extent are the programme's activities still relevant to **contribute to citizens' understanding of the Union, its shared history and diversity**?	- The activities under the remembrance strand of the Programme have as their main aim to contribute to **citizens understanding of the Union, its shared history and diversity.** - The activities financed respond sufficiently to the needs in the EU for understanding the Union, its shared history and diversity	- Perception of stakeholders (e.g. local authorities, NGOs, research institutes, etc.) on the relevance of the Programme activities to citizens understanding of the Union, its shared history and diversity which will be cross-referenced with desk research. - Correspondence of the programme activities in Strand 1 to the need to contribute to citizens' understanding of the Union, its shared history and diversity
To what extent are the programme's activities still relevant to **foster European**	- The activities under the civil society strand of the Programme have as their main aim to contribute to	- Perception of stakeholders (i.e. towns, municipalities, Town-Twinning committees, federations and

Evaluation questions	Judgement Criteria	Indicators
citizenship and to improve conditions for civic and democratic participation at the Union level?	fostering European citizenship and improving conditions for civic and democratic participation at EU level. - The activities financed respond sufficiently to the needs in the EU for encouraging the democratic and civic participation of citizens at EU level.	associations of local/regional authorities, NGOs, CSOs, think tanks) on the relevance of the Programme activities to foster European citizenship and to improve conditions for civic and democratic participation which will be cross-referenced with desk research (i.e. participating citizens discuss and reflect on EU matters, engage in further civic activities, participate to European democratic life, and entice others to engage). - Correspondence of the programme activities in Strand 2 to the need to foster European citizenship and to improve conditions for civic and democratic participation at the Union level
EU added-value		
What is the **EU added value** of the EfCP in terms of complementing **national / regional** initiatives and achieving results that would not have been possible through other means?	- Confirmation that the results could not have been achieved without EU intervention. - Confirmation that EU action allowed for the creation of synergies which would not exits otherwise.	- Uniqueness of offer of the EfCP in comparison with other citizenship support schemes at national/regional level (i.e. beneficiaries' level of reliance on EfCP, existence of other similar programmes at regional/national level).
		- Perception of stakeholders on whether the EfCP has contributed to improving citizens' understanding of the Union, its shared history and diversity in the EU.
		- Perception of stakeholders on whether the EfCP has contributed to improving conditions for civic and democratic participation in the EU (i.e. EU citizens discuss and reflect on EU matters, engage in further civic activities, participate to European democratic life, and entice others to engage).

Evaluation questions	Judgement Criteria	Indicators
		- Perception of stakeholders on the effect of synergies that occurred within the Programme whether synergies would have existed
		- Cross-analysing results of effectiveness and efficiency with the perceived added-value of the programme in comparison to other national regional initiatives
What would be the most likely consequences of stopping the Europe for Citizens Programme?	- Member States would not be able to offer the same support at national/regional level - Projects would not be carried out by Action Grant applicants if they were not funded by the programme - Operating Grant beneficiaries would have to stop some current activities if not funded by the Programme	- Indications of availability of alternative sources of funding on a regional / national level
		- Beneficiaries level of reliance on the funding (i.e. whether they would have carried out the project without funding from EfCP or was alternative funding available to them)
Effectiveness & sustainability		
To what extent have the activities undertaken in the framework of the EfCP programme been effective in contributing to the programme's general objectives of: - contributing to citizens' understanding of the Union, its shared history and diversity; and - fostering European citizenship and to improve conditions for civic and democratic participation at Union level.	Contributions to long term targets[148] have been made i.e.: - The capacity of civil society to influence the EU has been enhanced since 2013 - There has been increased contributions to political platforms in the European elections (2014)	Number and quality of initiatives promoted by citizens organisations with a view to[149]: - Having an impact on the EU policy making process - Strengthening cohesion in society - Enhancing the understanding of the role of the EU.
	- Stakeholders perceive programme actions to contribute positively to the overall capacity for civic participation at EU level.	- Stakeholder perception on the feeling of encouragement towards democratic and civic participation among direct and indirect project participants

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[148] As outlined in the Impact Assessment accompanying the Proposal for a Regulation of the Council establishing for the period 2014-2020 the programme "Europe for Citizens" to promote European citizenship, available: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52011SC1562&from=EN
[149] The indicators below are noted in the Impact Assessment accompanying the proposal for the Europe for Citizens Programme.

Evaluation questions	Judgement Criteria	Indicators
To what extent have the activities undertaken in the framework of the EfCP programme been effective in contributing to the programme's specific objective of raising awareness of remembrance, the common history and values of the Union and the Union's aim, namely to promote peace, the values of the Union and the well-being of its peoples, by stimulating debate, reflection and the development of networks.	Medium-term targets[150] have been reached (baselines to be provided by the Commission/EACEA): - The number of projects funded under Strand 1 has increased by at least 80%[151] - Minimum 15% of first time beneficiaries funded under Strand 1 each year since 2013 - The number of persons directly reached by the Programme is at least 600 000 per year since 2013	- Number of projects funded under Strand 1 - Number of first time beneficiaries funded under Strand 1 - Number of direct participants in funded projects per year since 2013
	Participants of projects funded under Strand 1: - Are more aware of the Union's shared history, values and aim; - Learn things about their common past; - Recognise that they share common values.	Perception of stakeholders on whether project participants: - Are more aware of the Union's shared history, values and aim; - Learn things about their common past; - Recognise that they share common values.
		- Level at which project participants feel more aware of the Union's shared history, values and aim after participation - Indication of project participants that they learned about the EUs common past - Level of recognition of project participants of common EU values

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[150] As outlined in the Impact Assessment accompanying the Proposal for a Regulation of the Council establishing for the period 2014-2020 the programme "Europe for Citizens" to promote European citizenship, available: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52011SC1562&from=EN

[151] It is noted that this quanititative criteria alone would not be capable of judging effectiveness however it is indicated in the Impact Assessment accompanying the programme proposal as such. It will be supplemented with quantitative and qualitative (based on stakeholder perception) indicators.

Evaluation questions	Judgement Criteria	Indicators
To what extent have the activities undertaken in the framework of the EfCP programme been effective in contributing to the programme's specific objective of encouraging the democratic and civic participation of citizens at Union level, by developing citizens' understanding of the Union policy making-process and promoting opportunities for societal and intercultural engagement and volunteering at Union level.	Medium-term targets[152] have been reached (baselines to be provided by the Commission/EACEA): - The number of persons directly reached by the Programme is at least 600 000 per year since 2013 - The number of persons indirectly reached by the Programme is at least 5 million since 2013 - The number of participating organisations is at least 2000 per year since 2013 - The percentage of first time beneficiaries is at least 15% - The number of transnational partnerships and networks has increased by 5% since 2013 - The number of multi-partner partnerships and networks have increased by 50% since 2013 - At least one project has been funded per country - The number and quality of policy initiatives following up on activities supported by the Programme at local or European level has increased	Monitoring data indicators: - Number of directly involved participants of funded activities - Number of persons reached indirectly by the Programme - Number of organisations participating in the Programme - Percentage of first time beneficiaries - Number of transnational and multi-partner partnerships and networks - Number and quality of policy initiatives following-up on activities supported by the programme at the local or European level - Geographical coverage of the activities - Correlation between the number of participants in the Programme and total population per country
		- Indication by stakeholders (project managers or project participants) that policy initiatives following up on activities supported by the Programme at local or European level has increased - Indication by stakeholders (project managers or project participants) that the quality of policy initiatives following up on activities supported by the Programme at local or European level has improved
	Effects have been experienced by participants, i.e.: - Participants are more aware of the influence of Europe in everyday life - Participants learn about the Union policy-making process and EU citizenship	Perception of stakeholders on whether project participants: - are more aware of the Union's shared history, values and aim; - Learn things about their common past; - Recognise that they share common values.

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[152] As outlined in the Impact Assessment accompanying the Proposal for a Regulation of the Council establishing for the period 2014-2020 the programme "Europe for Citizens" to promote European citizenship, available: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52011SC1562&from=EN

Evaluation questions	Judgement Criteria	Indicators
	- Participants get involved in a civic project and/or experience democratic debate with other Europeans	- Level at which project participants feel more aware of the influence of Europe in everyday life - Indication by project participants that they learned about the Union policy-making process and EU citizenship - Indication by project participants that they were subsequently involved in a civic project and/or experienced democratic debate with other Europeans.
To what extent have the activities under the horizontal aspect of the Programme been effective in providing analysis, dissemination and use of project results?	Activities conducted under the horizontal aspect of the Programme produced effective analysis, dissemination and use of project results.	Number of communication activities organised under the horizontal aspect of the programme i.e.: - Events - Dissemination materials
		Stakeholder perception on the effectiveness of the activities conducted under the horizontal aspects
Does participation in the programme appear satisfactory in terms of the **balance between new organisations and those which have received support previously**?	- There is at least 15% of funding provided to first time beneficiaries	- Proportion of new beneficiaries funded by the Programme
To what extent has the EfCP programme been successful in delivering **sustainable outcomes** in relation to its objectives?	- Projects have created lasting effects on participants i.e.: Participating citizens develop a feeling of EU belonging, engage in further civic activities, participate in European democratic life and entice others to engage.	- Stakeholder perception on whether participants in projects found it memorable and/or make EU values their own - Stakeholder perception on whether participants spread their point of view in their entourage and/or enticed others to engage

Evaluation questions	Judgement Criteria	Indicators
		- Participants feel like the project they participated in made a lasting impression - Participants feel a deeper sense of "EU belonging" - Participants shared their experience/new knowledge with others - Participants were involved in similar events afterwards
	- Beneficiary organisations continue activities after the funding from the EfCP has ceased e.g. continuing to implement the project, cooperation on another similar initiative - Operating Grant beneficiaries fund sustainable projects	- Indication of collaboration between beneficiaries in similar events/projects after initial event - Indication of whether participants engage in similar events/projects after initial event - Indication of activities/projects continuing after funding
Efficiency		

Were the activities undertaken in the framework of the EfCP programme efficient at achieving results at European and national level?
Strand 1:
i. Was the size of the **budget allocated to projects funded under Strand 1 appropriate and proportional** to achieve the programme objectives?
ii. Were **positive effects** achieved at **reasonable costs**?
	i. The budget allocated to Strand 1 is appropriate and proportionate to achieve the objective of raising awareness of remembrance, the common history and values of the Union and the Union's aim, namely to promote peace, the values of the Union and the well-being of its peoples, by stimulating debate, reflection and the development of networks	i. Assessment of the appropriateness and proportionality of the budget funded under Strand 1 in terms of e.g.:
		  a. Comparison of programme budget and outputs with the Rights, Equality and Citizenship programme and Erasmus + Programme and identification of factors that may cause differences.
		  b. Comparison of programme budget and outputs with other national funding programmes of similar scope/size and identification of factors that may cause differences.

	ii. Positive effects were achieved (as determined by evaluation of effectiveness above) at reasonable cost i.e. the same results could not have been achieved at a lower cost for projects under Strand 1	iii. Assessment of whether the costs for individual projects were reasonable compared to the outputs and whether the same results could have been achieved at lower costs, e.g. based on:
		  a. Comparison of unit prices;
		  b. Comparison of costs for similar national projects;
		  c. Extent to which the beneficiaries applied monitoring techniques;

Evaluation questions	Judgement Criteria	Indicators
		d. Extent to which the actions relied on volunteers; e. Assessment whether sufficient resources were allocated for the projects, e.g. based on perceptions of managers/participants.
	Administrative burdens did not outweigh the benefit of funding.	Assessment on whether the administrative burden on project managers was reasonable compared to the budget (% of administrative burden compared to project size and type of grant; perception of managers on the reasonableness of administrative activities..)[153]
Strand 2 i. Was the size of the budget allocated to projects funded under Strand 2 appropriate and proportional to achieve the programme objectives? ii. Were positive effects achieved at reasonable costs?	i. The budget allocated to Strand 2 is appropriate and proportional to achieve the objective of encouraging the democratic and civic participation of citizens at Union level, by developing citizens' understanding of the Union policy making-process and promoting opportunities for societal and intercultural engagement and volunteering at Union level.	i. Assessment of the appropriateness and proportionality of the budget funded under Strand 2 in terms of e.g.: a. Comparison of programme budget and outputs with the Rights, Equality and Citizenship programme and Erasmus + Programme and identification of factors that may cause differences. b. Comparison of programme budget and outputs with other national funding programmes of similar scope/size and identification of factors that may cause differences.
	ii. Positive effects were achieved (as determined by evaluation of effectiveness above) at reasonable cost i.e. the same results could not have been achieved at a lower cost for projects under Strand 2	iii. Assessment of whether the costs for individual projects were reasonable compared to the outputs and whether the same results could have been achieved at lower costs, e.g. based on: a. Comparison of unit prices; b. Comparison of costs for similar national projects;

[153]To the extent that data is available

Evaluation questions	Judgement Criteria	Indicators
		c. Extent to which the beneficiaries applied monitoring techniques; d. Extent to which the actions relied on volunteers; e. Assessment whether sufficient resources were allocated for the projects, e.g. based on perceptions of managers/participants.
Valorisation i. Was the size of the **budget allocated to horizontal aspects (i.e. valorisation) appropriate and proportional** to achieve the programme objectives? ii. Were **positive effects** achieved at **reasonable costs**?	i. The **budget allocated to horizontal aspects is appropriate and proportional** to achieve sufficient analysis, dissemination and use of project results.	i. Assessment of the appropriateness and proportionality of the budget for horizontal aspects in terms of e.g.: a. Comparison of budget and outputs with the Rights, Equality and Citizenship programme and Erasmus + Programme regarding awareness-raising activities
	iii. P**ositive effects** were achieved (as determined by evaluation of effectiveness above) at reasonable cost i.e. the same results could not have been achieved at a lower cost for horizontal aspects	iv. Assessment of whether the costs for activities under the horizontal aspect of the programme were reasonable compared to the outputs and whether the same results could have been achieved at lower costs, e.g. based on: a. Comparison of costs for similar programmes; b. Perceptions of stakeholders;
Which type of grants (Operating Grants compared to Action Grants) have been the most efficient tool to achieve the objectives of the programme?	- Comparison of efficiency of each type of grant in comparison to the programme objectives	- Analysis of data collected as part of previous efficiency questions
	- Operating Grants and Action Grants are equally efficient in achieving the objectives of the programme.	- Perception of stakeholders on the efficiency of Operating Grants compared to Action Grants in each of the strands.

Is there any scope for **simplification**?	- There is scope for simplification in:
	  o The application process
	  o The project reporting requirements
	  o The programme structure
		- Evaluator assessment of potential areas for simplification
		- Stakeholder perception of areas for potential simplification

Evaluation questions	Judgement Criteria	Indicators
	o The Programme Guide/priorities o The monitoring process o The application evaluation process	- Comparison of the EfCP with other similar initiatives at EU level[154]
Coherence		
To what extent has the programme so far proved **complementarity to other EU funding programmes with related objectives**, in particular in the area of citizens' rights education and culture?	- The EfCP complements other Programmes at EU level (i.e. has a unique offering and doesn't overlap in terms of activities/aims/objectives) (including for example Youth in Action Programme, Rights, Equality and Citizenship programmes) - Synergies add to the effectiveness and efficiency of the EfCP.	- Level of overlap with other programmes/initiatives in terms of aim and objectives - Existence of synergies between the EfCP and other funding Programmes at EU level[155] - Perception of stakeholders on the coherence of the Programme with EU policies.
How well **did the EfCP programme work together with other EU instrument**s, in particular in the area of education, vocational training and youth (including voluntary service), sport, culture, fundamental rights, social inclusion, gender equality, combating discrimination, research and innovation, information society, enlargement and the external action of the Union?	- The EfCP complements other instruments at EU level in the area of education, vocational training and youth, sport, culture, fundamental rights, social inclusion, gender equality, combating discrimination, research and innovation, information society, enlargement and the external action of the Union in that any relevant synergies exist and work well.	- Existence of synergies with other EU instruments in the areas of education, vocational training and youth, sport, culture, fundamental rights, social inclusion, gender equality, combating discrimination, research and innovation, information society, enlargement and the external action of the Union. - Perception of stakeholders on the effectiveness of such synergies and identification of areas for improvement.
	- The objectives of the strands of the EfCP are consistent and mutually supportive	- Numbers of cooperation agreements/events between beneficiaries of the 2 strands

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[154] Other European programmes could be for example: Youth in Action, Jean Monnet, Fundamental rights and citizenship programmes, and the European years of citizens and volunteering.

[155] Other European programmes could be for example: Youth in Action, Jean Monnet, Fundamental rights and citizenship programmes, and the European years of citizens and volunteering.

Evaluation questions	Judgement Criteria	Indicators
To what extent are the **objectives of different strands** of the programme consistent and mutually supportive? What evidence exists of synergies between the different strands and actions? How well do both strands work together?	- The objectives of the strands of the EfCP are complementary and avoid duplication - Synergies between the strands exist	- Stakeholder perception of the evidence of synergies between the different strands and actions.

Annex B - Methodology used for the evaluation

The evaluation was carried out in **three phases**, as presented in the figure below:

Figure 24: Phases of the evaluation
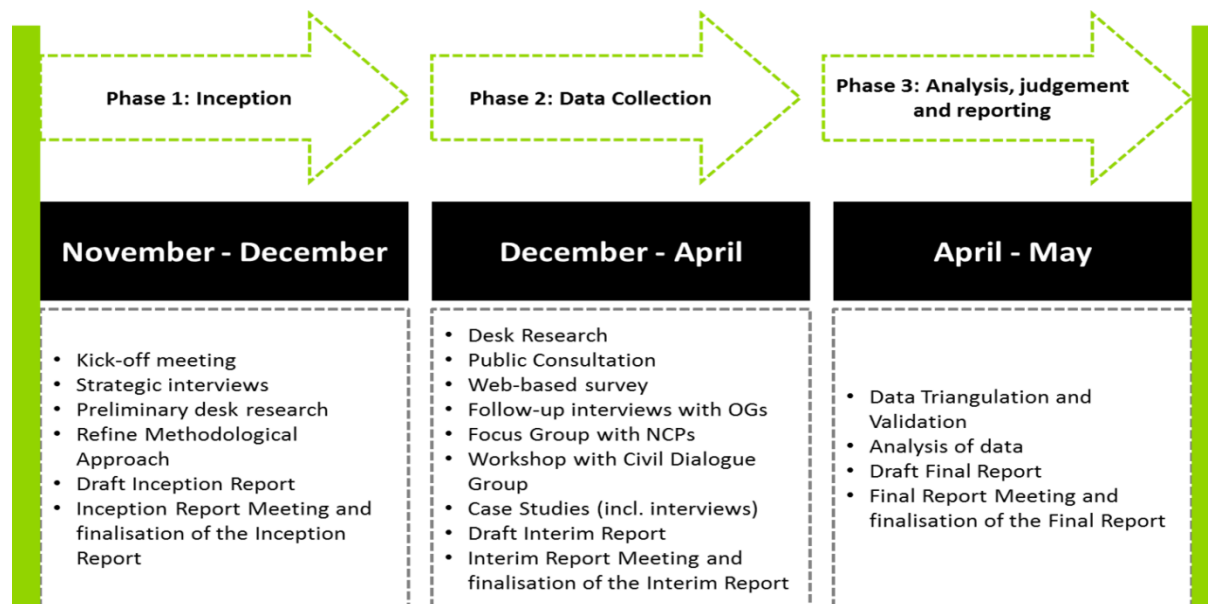
In Phase 3, once all data collection activities were concluded, we **triangulated** the data from all the different sources and tools. Data triangulation involved using different sources of information in order to increase the validity of the findings, by confirming results and findings from different sources.

Source: Study team

The triangulation technique was used to test the data quality, robustness and relevance. Furthermore, triangulation was used to put together quantitative and qualitative data and to ensure the overall coherence of the analysis. It also constituted a tool for delivering evidence-based assumptions when limited data was available on certain specific topics.

When views of a certain profile of stakeholders seem overrepresented (as a result of the scope of our different activities undertaken in the evaluation), as it might be argued for the Operating Grant beneficiaries, we combatted any potential bias by presenting balanced views when analysing and triangulating our findings and putting forward objective and balanced conclusions.

Desk research

Desk research was an important aspect of the study. Information was sourced in the studies conducted on the previous programming period, the current programming period, as well as within the specific **monitoring data** collected by EACEA on several indicators. The desk research exercise entailed a lot of analysis due to the high volume of information available.

The complete set of documents that were consulted for this study are listed below:

Legal basis of EfCP Programme

- Council Regulation (EU) No 390/2014 of 14 April 2014 establishing the Europe for Citizens Programme for the period 2014-2020;
- Decision No 1904/2006/EC of the European Parliament and the Council of 12 December 2006, establishing for the period 2007 to 2013 the programme 'Europe for citizens' to promote active European citizenship;
- Council Decision 2004/100/EC of 26 January 2004 establishing a Community action programme to promote Active European Citizenship.

Commission Implementing Decisions 2014, 2015, 2016

- Commission Implementing Decision C(2013)7160 concerning the adoption of the 2014 work programme and the financing for the implementation of the Europe for Citizens Programme;
- Commission Implementing Decision C(2014)9220 on the adoption of the 2015 work programme and the financing for the implementation of the Europe for Citizens Programme;
- Commission Implementing Decision C(2015)9186 on the adoption of the 2016 work programme and the financing for the implementation of the Europe for Citizens Programme;

EU documents

- European Commission, Secretary-General, Director-General for Budget, Note for the attention of Directors General and Heads of Service, Preparation of the post-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework programmes: guidance to services, Brussels, SG.B.1/ BUDG.B.1
- European Commission Report to the European Parliament. the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the implementation, results and overall assessment of the "Europe of Citizens" Programme 2007-2013, COM(2015) 652 final.
- European Commission Staff Working Document, Better Regulation Guidelines, {COM(2015) 215 final}, {SWD(2015) 110 final}, Strasbourg, 19.5.2015
- European Commission, Better Regulation Toolbox
- European Council 15 and 16 October 1999 of Tampere, Presidency Conclusions
- European Council 7 – 10 December 2000 of Nice, Presidency Conclusions
- European Parliament, Directorate General for Internal Policies, Policy Department B: Structural and Cohesion Policies, Culture and Education, Note on Europe for Citizens (2014-2020), IP/B/CULT/NT/2012-001, September 2012
- European Parliament, Europe for Citizens Programme 2014-2020. European Implementation Assessment, July 2016
- European Parliament, Directorate General for Internal Policies, Policy Department B: Structural and Cohesion Policies, Culture and Education, Europe for Citizens Programme: New Programme Implementation – First Experiences, July 2016
- European Parliament, Report on the implementation of Council Regulation (EU) No 390/2014 of 14 April 2014 establishing the 'Europe for Citizens' programme for the period 2014−2020, (2015/2329(INI)), Committee on Culture and Education, Rapporteur: María Teresa Giménez Barbat, 1.02.2017
- European Parliament resolution of 2 March 2017 on the implementation of Council Regulation (EU) No 390/2014 of 14 April 2014 establishing the 'Europe for Citizens' programme for the period 2014-2020 (2015/2329(INI)), P8_TA-PROV(2017)0063
- EU Citizenship Report 2017, Strengthening Citizens' Rights in a Union of Democratic Change, DG JUST, 2017
- Eurobarometer

EfCP documentation

- Annual Activities Reports of the Europe for Citizens Programme, DG HOME
- Call for proposals for Operating Grants 2014-2017
- EACEA Report Activities (2014, 2015, 2016)
- Europe for Citizens Programme Beneficiaries' lists (available at: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/europe-for-citizens_en)
- Europe for Citizens Programme guides
- Europe for Citizens, results 2007-2013, 22.10.2014
- Europe for Citizens: new programme implementation-first experiences, 2016
- Framework for Civil Dialogue in Matters Covered, by the "Europe For Citizens" Programme 2014-2020
- Internal Monitoring Documents of EACEA (including indicators)
- Minutes of the Civil Dialogue meetings (2014, 2015, 2016)
- Minutes of the Programme Committee meetings (2014, 2015, 2016)
- National Contact Points, Vademecum, November 2016
- Programme multi-annual priorities
- Rules of procedure for the "Europe for citizens" committee, EFCC/002/2014 - EN
- Selection results (2014, 2015, 2016)
- Working Programme Statements (ref. DB2018)

Past EfCP evaluation reports

- Commission Report to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, on the mid-term evaluation of the "Europe for Citizens" Programme 2007-2013, COM(2011) 83 final, Brussels, 1.3.2011
- Commission Staff Working paper – Executive summary of the Impact assessment, accompanying the document "Proposal for a Regulation of the Council establishing for the period 2014-2020 the programme "Europe for Citizens" to promote European citizenship", COM(2011)884 final, SEC (2011)1562 final
- Mid-term evaluation of the Europe for Citizens Programme 2007-2013, by Ecorys
- Ex-post evaluation of the Europe for Citizens Programme 2007-2013, by Coffey International and Deloitte, September 2015
- Study on measuring the impact of the Europe for Citizens Programme 2007-2013, by Euréval, May 2013

Strategic interviews

We conducted **14 interviews** with a number of EU officials (from DG HOME, DG JUST, EACEA, European Parliament, Members of Cabinet and DG EAC) and **four interviews** with members of the Programme Committee (from France, Greece, Hungary and Slovenia). The main aim of these interviews was to obtain insights on some particular aspects of the programme, but also on the more general issues of programme design and implementation. The list of interviews conducted are provided in the table below:

Name	Role/position	Date of interview
EU officials		
Marta Cygan	DG HOME, Director, Directorate A "Strategy and general affairs"	30 November 2016
Christine Grau	DG HOME, Head of unit, A1 Inter-institutional Relations and Citizenship	28 November 2016
Pavel Tychtl	DG HOME, Policy officer, Unit A1 Inter-institutional Relations and Citizenship, citizenship sector, responsible for the European remembrance strand	28 November 2016
Jutta Koenig-Georgiades	DG HOME, Policy officer, Unit A1 Inter-institutional Relations and Citizenship, citizenship sector, responsible for the strand civic participation	28 November 2016
Gilles Pelayo Anna Cozzoli Inna Petrenko	EACEA, Head of Unit C1 Europe for Citizens EACEA, Head of sector within C1 Europe for Citizens EACEA, Head of sector within C1 Europe for Citizens	2 December 2016
Cécile Le Clercq	Former member of the citizenship sector (responsible for Operating Grants and civil dialogue) and now policy officer at DG EAC - Unit B2 Schools and educators; multilingualism	29 November 2016
Marie-Hélène Boulanger Aikaterini Dimitrakopoulou	DG JUST, Acting Director, Directorate D Equality and Union citizenship	1 December 2016
Fabienne Pondeville	European Parliament, CULT committee	1 December 2016
Konstantinos Chatzifotis	Member of Cabinet, Cabinet Avramopoulos	2 December 2016
Bruno Denis	Former member of the citizenship sector (responsible for Operating Grants and civil dialogue)	2 December 2016
Szilvia Kálmán	EAC, Policy officer, Unit A1 Europe 2020, Investment Plan, Education Training 2020	13 December 2016
Programme Committee Members		
Urška Zupanec (Slovenia)	Senior Adviser, Office for EU Affairs and International Cooperation	6 December 2016

Name	Role/position	Date of interview
Antonios Karvounis (Greece)	Hellenic Ministry of Interior & Administrative Reconstruction	8 December 2016
Michele Ferrari (France)	EU Affairs Directorate, Ministry of Foreign Affairs	22 December 2016
Anita Kardos (Hungary)	Communication & PR, Tempus Public Foundation	20 January 2017

Public consultation

A **public consultation** in all languages was available online for the mandatory period of 12 weeks between 9 January 2017 to 10 April 2017. In total, the public consultation received **322 responses**. The public consultation gave the possibility to interested parties to express their views and opinions on the EfCP and focused on the following topics:

- Awareness, experience and involvement of survey participants in the EfCP and EU-related activities;
- Importance of activities funded by EfCP for EU action;
- Effects of the survey respondents' participation in the EfCP; and
- Interest in taking part in activities funded by the EfCP.

A report on the findings of the public consultation is provided in Annex D.

Web-based survey

A **web-based survey** in English was launched via the EU Survey platform, targeting the following stakeholder groups:

- Action Grant beneficiaries;
- Operating Grant beneficiaries; and
- Unsuccessful applicants.

The survey allowed respondents of these three groups to be presented with a different set of questions according to their replies to a profile filtering question asked at the beginning of the survey. The survey was open from 16 January 2017 until 10 March 2017 and received **80 responses**.

The results of the survey are presented in Annex C.

Phone interviews with Operating Grants beneficiaries

In follow-up to their responses to the survey, **four Operating Grant beneficiary** respondents were interviewed. These interviews were used to address any remaining information gaps and to gather further qualitative information on their responses to the survey.

Workshop with members of the Civil Dialogue Group (CDG)

A workshop with the members of the CDG was held on 15 February 2017 at Deloitte's premises. The evaluation team welcomed **20 members of the CDG**. The majority of workshop participants were current or past beneficiaries of the programme, while a small minority were first-time beneficiaries. The group of attendees was composed of two NGOs, eight associations, six organisations and networks of organisation, three research centres and one think tank. The vast majority of participants were Brussels-based, some (while EU-focused) were based elsewhere and a small number were national organisations.

Online focus group with National Contact Points (NCPs)

Three online focus groups (of 1.5 hours each) with NCPs took place on 7, 8 and 9 February 2017 respectively. In total, **17 NCPs** participated in the focus group exercise. They represented NCPs hosted in a variety of institutions, including ministries (of foreign or EU affairs, culture, etc.), governmental bodies and other entities to which the NCP functioning grant has been awarded by the competent national authorities. They had different levels of experience regarding the 2014-2020 programme and its predecessors.

Case studies

The evaluation team conducted **20 case studies** on current projects of the Programme, consisting of a review of project documentation and an interview with the project manager. Case study projects were selected by the team **at random** (so as to ensure a representative sample) while applying the criteria agreed with the Steering Group at the Inception Meeting of this evaluation study, i.e.:

- Size of the project (its budget);
- Number of direct participants;
- Geographical balance[156].

We liaised with EACEA for obtaining all relevant project information (i.e. application and final project reports when available) and we completed the analysis of all documentation provided. Information gathered from project documentation and desk research was also supplemented by an interview with project managers. This provided us with further insights to the project that may not have been captured in reporting. Interviews also allowed us to gather feedback on the programme overall. Practically, to gather relevant information from the projects we devised case study grids for both of the two strands respectively. The finalisation of these grids was overseen by the domain experts of the team, who also

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[156] Additional selection criteria discussed were: timing (the length of the project), diversity of themes, the quality of the project (if the owner of the project has received EfCP or European funds previously), and sustainability. It was though agreed that due to the small number of case studies that would be conducted it is not possible to apply all these additional criteria and priority was given to the first 3 criteria (i.e. budget, number of participants, geographical balance) and the other criteria will be applied to the extent possible.

conducted a piloting exercise on a first draft of the grid to pinpoint any difficulties or changes required.

The allocation of 20 case studies across the strands was the following:

- Strand 1: seven case studies
- Strand 2:
    – Town twining: four case studies
    – Network of cities: four case studies
    – Civil society projects: five case studies

In all case studies, project applications and other relevant materials (e.g. website, social media page, blog posts, news, publications, etc.) were reviewed. Final reports were also analysed when available (some projects analysed were currently ongoing). The table below presents the projects that were used in case studies.

Table 22: Overview of projects selected for case studies

Organisation	Project	Year	Applicant Country	Budget (EUR)
Strand 1 – Remembrance				
Gong	Looking into future Europe	2014	HR	25 250
Narodowe centrum kultury	Sound in the Silence	2014	PL	40 000
Consiglio Italiano del Movimento Europeo	SMILE - Sharing Messina Ideal a Lesson for all Europe	2014	IT	92 750
Fundacja Centrum Edkacl Obywatelskiej	Inspired by the memory	2015	PL	47 250
Smashing Times Theatre Company Limited	Women, War and Peace	2015	IE	100 000
Post-Conflict Research Center	Ordinary Heroes	2016	BA	50 250
Inter Alia	In RETROSPECT	2016	EL	100 000
Strand 2 - Democratic engagement and civic participation				
Networks of Towns				
Obshtina Strumyani	Authentic Europe Network	2014	BG	140 000
Stichting Sero Waste Europe	Town to Town, People to People – Building a European Culture of Zero Waste	2014	NL	60 000
Heldingborgstad	Sustainable aging in Future Europe	2015	SE	70 000
Public institution "sveikatingumo idejos"	Challenges for Europe - Understand and Overcome Together	2016	LT	150 000
Town-Twinning				
Ayuntamiento San Bartolomé De Las Abiertas	Hermanamiento entre San Bartolomé de las Abiertas y Lavernose-Lacasse	2014	ES	5 000

Organisation	Project	Year	Applicant Country	Budget (EUR)
Colors Of Europe Association	4ème Festival of Europe : l'Europe c'est vous !	2015	FR	25 000
Mladinski Center Hrastnik	Bridge to Europe	2015	SI	5 000
Newbury Twin Town Association	A debate on the future of europe following the UK referendum on EU membership	2016	UK	14 500
Civil Society Projects				
Telecentre-Europe AISBL	Enabling European e-Participation	2014	BE	150 000
Asociación Building Bridges	YesEuropa: young volunteers changing Europe	2014	ES	37 500
Novi Homines	Prisoners: Present Discussion and Contribution to the Future European Union	2015	LT	59 750
Associação Backup	People's Corner, Raising Local Governance through People's Voice	2016	PT	130 000
Cross culture international foundation CCIF	The Citizens are Speaking	2016	MT	60 000

In the following tables, we present key figures on **direct and indirect participants** reached by the projects analysed for the case study exercise.

Table 23: Case studies – direct and indirect participants reached

Strand 1

Project title	Country	EfCP funding (EUR)	Participants
Looking into future Europe	HR	25 250	167 participants took part in the two public events. The impact through media coverage is hard to measure in numbers.
Sound in the Silence	PL	40 000	80 instead of the 110 projected in the application. The number of people which it was expected to reach indirectly –was 30 000 people. This estimate was based on radio and TV audience figures, newspaper circulation and the number of recipients of organiser's and partners' websites.
SMILE - Sharing Messina Ideal a Lesson for all Europe	IT	92 750	522 instead of 230 projected in the application. Disadvantaged people are also in this figure (40 in total) as well as audiences from other EU countries (44 in total). This was not foreseen at the proposal phase. Over 200 educational institutes also onboard from the countries involved. People reached indirectly: the number of people reached indirectly by different forms of communication can be estimated as at least 15 000.

Project title	Country	EfCP funding (EUR)	Participants
Inspired by the memory	PL	47 250	350 participants, 272 of them younger than 30. Number of people reached indirectly reached by the project: • Local youth film project coordination (2000 people) • Website and FB fanpage: 32 000 users • Final Film Festival: 120 students and teachers
Women, War and Peace	IE	100 000	Application estimates 500 people.
Ordinary Heroes	BA	50 250	70 participants aged 15-30 in the workshops in Skopje, 48 in Belgrade, 53 in Split. Exhibitions open to the public.
In RETROSPECT	EL	100 000	640 participants expected for the local events and the final event.

Strand 2

Project title	Country	EfCP funding (EUR)	Participants
Town-Twinning			
Hermanamiento entre San Bartolomé de las Abiertas y Lavernose-Lacasse	ES	5 000	80 direct participants. 200 indirect participants.
4ème Festival of Europe : l'Europe c'est vous !	FR	25 000	Direct participants: 20,000 visitors. Indirect participants: 40,000 visitors.
Bridge to Europe	SI	5 000	126 Facebook likes
A debate on the future of Europe following the UK referendum on EU membership	UK	14 500	Project involved over 170 direct participants at the event with all partner towns sending delegations to the Newbury event. Indirectly reached hundreds more in the Newbury area through dissemination and publicity and in twinned towns through their websites and reports.
Network of towns			
Authentic Europe Network	BG	140 000	Reached 680 citizens directly rather than 675 forecast at the start, with 20 of them classified as from disadvantaged groups.
Town to Town, People to People – Building a European Culture of Zero Waste	NL	60 000	Over 600 participants involved directly

Project title	Country	EfCP funding (EUR)	Participants
European Accessible Sustainable Young TOWNS	IT	145 000	Aim to reach 600 citizens directly and 10 000 indirectly.
Challenges for Europe - Understand and Overcome Together	LT	150 000	Direct participants in low thousands but planning via website and social media platform to reach hundreds of thousands, though will need proof that this has been successfully achieved.
Civil society projects			
Enabling European e-Participation	BE	150 000	Exceeded reach to direct participants from over 1000 to over 1600 because of untapped interest in e-participation among citizens of all ages and backgrounds.
YesEuropa: young volunteers changing Europe	ES	37 500	Informative sessions about volunteering opportunities: 200 people. International voluntary fair: 200 people. Short period volunteering: 25 young people.
Prisoners: Present Discussion and Contribution to the Future European Union	LT	59 750	Reaching 200 000 people directly and at least one prison per country was visited. Indirectly over 2 million people were reached by the project (calculated based on newspaper readership, the audience of their TV channel, and Facebook statistics).
People's Corner, Raising Local Governance through People's Voice	PT	130 000	Target: 6 230 direct participants and 9.160 indirect participants.
The citizens are speaking	MT	60 000	Estimated 196 participants in application[157].

Source: Study team, based on application and final reports of case study projects

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[157] The project was not finished by the time of our case study exercise.

Annex C - Web-based survey results

A web-based survey in English was launched via the EU Survey platform, targeting programme beneficiaries and unsuccessful applicants.

The survey allowed respondents of these three groups to be presented with a different set of questions according to their replies to a profile filtering question asked at the beginning of the survey.

The survey was open from 16 January 2017 until 10 March 2017 and received **80 responses**.

The results in figures are provided below.

Profile and awareness questions

Profile of survey respondents

An Action Grant Beneficiary under Strand 2	41
An Action Grant Beneficiary under Strand 1	7
An Operating Grant Beneficiary under Strand 2	24
An Operating Grant Beneficiary under Strand 1	3
A Beneficiary under Horizontal Action and administration (Analysis, dissemination and use of project results)	0
An unsuccessful applicant	5

N = 80

You are responding on behalf of:

A non-profit organisation	38
A public authority	37
An academic/research institution	3
A pan-European interest group	2

N = 80

How did you find out about the Programme?

Source	Count
European Commission website (i.e. EUROPA https://europa.eu/)	32
Information from another organisation	16
The National Contact Point	15
Local authority (community development, citizen's information office, etc.)	9
I went to an Europe for Citizens event	8
The Commission Representation in my country	6
NGO social media networks (e.g. Facebook, Twitter)	5
Printed information on the EU (e.g. publications, leaflets, brochures)	4
Internet search engine (e.g. Google)	2
Local or regional press / advertising	1
European institution social media networks (e.g. Facebook, Twitter)	1
Family / colleagues / friends	1
TV or radio	0
I do not know	2
Other	8

N = 110

Questions on the EfCP's structure

Assessment of the current structure of the Programme

	Very satisfying	Rather satisfying	Rather disatisfying	Very dissatisfying	I do not know
Information exchange with EACEA	36	24	10	1	4
Receipt of funding	23	41	6	1	4
Adequate and on-time information about the calls	39	27	7		11
Geographical scope (EU28 and eligible third countries)	45	19	5	1	5
Lump-sum approach	34	24	7	2	8
Duration of the selection process	19	40	13	1	2
Feedback received (accepted/rejected proposal)	34	23	11	2	5
Support from the National Contact Point (NCP) throughout the application process	32	15	8	5	15
Selection criteria	27	37	4	0	7
Objectives of the Programme to be reflected on the application	39	32	4		0
Detailed guide for applications	34	34	6		0
User-friendly application process (digitalised eForm)	35	32	8		0

N = 75

Level of satisfaction concerning the NCP services

	Very satisfying	Satisfying	Disatisfying	Very dissatisfying	I have not used this service
Reviews of draft application(s)	14	12	0	3	51
Facilitation on partner search	12	12	0	3	53
Advice on writing the application	17	16	1	3	43
Advice on conceptualising your idea	15	16	1	4	44
Request for information/clarifications	27	19	1	7	26
Other	4	1	0	3	25

N = 80

How would you respond to the following statements about the Programme?

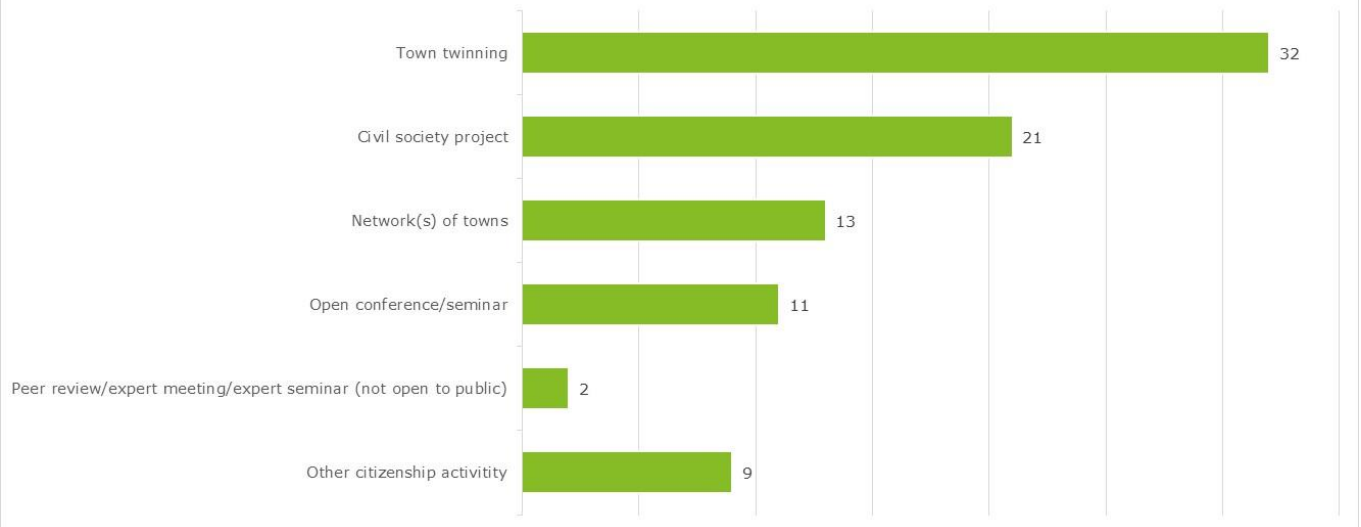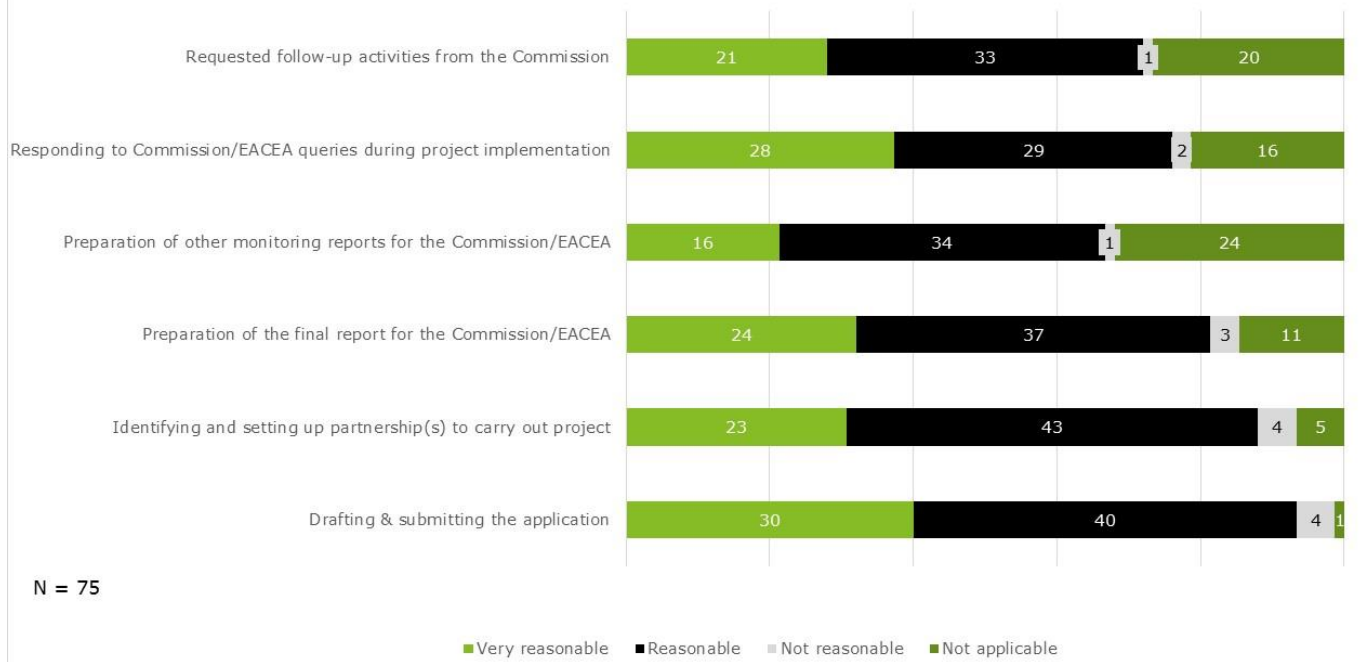|	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	I do not know
The Programme effectively aims to foster European citizenship and to improve conditions for civic and democratic participation	40	35	2	1	2
The Programme effectively aims to enhance citizens understanding of the European Union, its shared history and diversity	36	38	2	0	4

N = 80

Questions on projects' implementation and EU funding

What sort of activities did you implement with the funding received from the EfCP? (Strand 1)

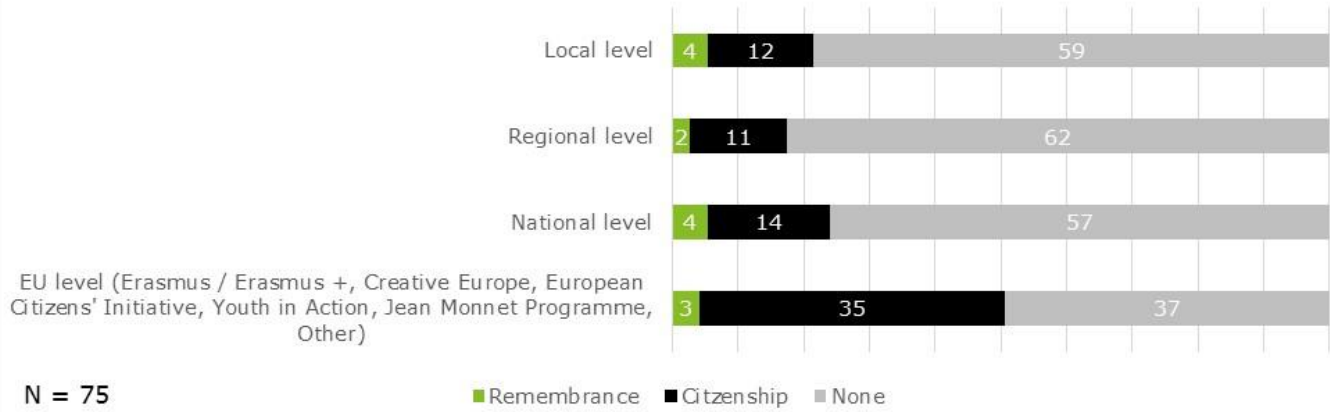|	
Conference open to the general public focusing on European Remembrance	9
Museum exhibition (remembrance)	9
Peer review/expert meeting/expert seminar focusing on European Remembrance (not open to public)	6
Commemmoration or award ceremony (remembrance)	6
Other remembrance activity	7

What sort of activities did you implement with the funding received from the EfCP? (Strand 2)

Activity	Value
Town twinning	32
Civil society project	21
Network(s) of towns	13
Open conference/seminar	11
Peer review/expert meeting/expert seminar (not open to public)	2
Other citizenship activitity	9

Burden of administrative tasks

Task	Very reasonable	Reasonable	Not reasonable	Not applicable
Requested follow-up activities from the Commission	21	33	1	20
Responding to Commission/EACEA queries during project implementation	28	29	2	16
Preparation of other monitoring reports for the Commission/EACEA	16	34	1	24
Preparation of the final report for the Commission/EACEA	24	37	3	11
Identifying and setting up partnership(s) to carry out project	23	43	4	5
Drafting & submitting the application	30	40	4	1

N = 75

■ Very reasonable ■ Reasonable ▢ Not reasonable ■ Not applicable

What impacts do you feel the funded project had?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	I do not know	Not applicable
Participants returned to take part in other similar activities	28	29	1	3	12	2
Participants shared their experience/knowledge with others	48	21	0	2	3	1
Participants adopted stronger EU values	27	33	2	3	8	2
Participants found their experience memorable	40	26	1	2	4	2
Participants recognised that they share common values with others in Europe	42	24	1	3	3	2
Participants learned things about their common past	26	23	2	2	4	17
Participants were more aware of the EU's history, values and aim	32	27	1	3	3	9
Participants were encouraged towards democratic and civic participation	39	29	0	3	2	2

N = 75

Have you ever received funding for remembrance/citizenship related activities from:

	Remembrance	Citizenship	None
Local level	4	12	59
Regional level	2	11	62
National level	4	14	57
EU level (Erasmus / Erasmus +, Creative Europe, European Citizens' Initiative, Youth in Action, Jean Monnet Programme, Other)	3	35	37

N = 75

To what extent would it be possible for organisation to remain operational without the EU funding under the EfCP?

Very difficult	24
Difficult	23
Not too difficult	14
Not difficult at all	8
I do not know	6

N = 75
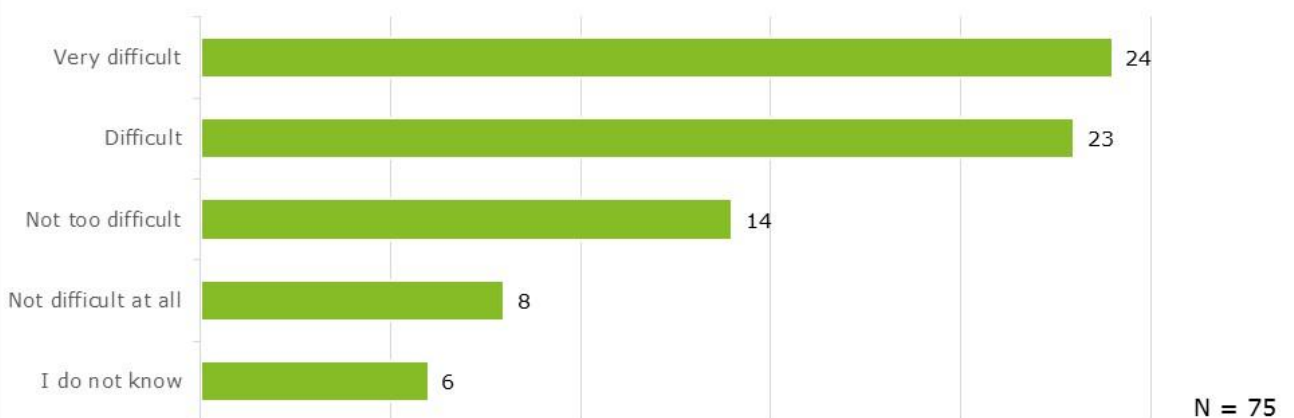
Annex D - Public consultation results

The Public Consultation (PC) was launched on 9 January 2017 and remained open on the Commission's dedicated webpage for public consultations until 10 April 2017. The public consultation was accessible to all citizens. It was announced and promoted in different channels such as the EACEA website, the National Contact Points, and Your Europe, but also on DG HOME's webpage.

The purpose of the consultation was to collect insights and experiences on the EfCP from the general public but also from beneficiaries (i.e. organisations that have received/receive funding), from organisations who could be interested in the programme but who have not yet submitted an application for funding, as well as unsuccessful applicants. It also fulfils the consultation requirement stipulated in the Better Regulation Guidelines that were published in May 2015.

The Public Consultation gave the possibility to interested parties to express their views and opinions on the EfCP and focused on the following topics:

- Awareness, experience and involvement in the EfCP and EU-related activities;
- Importance of activities funded by EfCP for EU action; and
- Interest in taking part in EfCP activities and effects of past participation.

The Public Consultation also included a number of profile questions and asked for contact details (optional) whereas allowed the respondents to strengthen their replies by uploading any position papers of their organisations.

A total of 35 questions were included, in both open and close format. The Public Consultation was available in all official languages of the EU.

The paragraphs below summarise the findings of the Public Consultation survey on the basis of the responses collected and analysed by the evaluation team, as well as any received contributions.

Profile of respondents

At the closing of the survey on 10 April 2017, a total of 322 responses had been received. The survey respondents were initially asked to state the quality in which they were filling out the survey. Figure 26 indicates that over two thirds of respondents responded on behalf of an organisation or in their professional capacity.
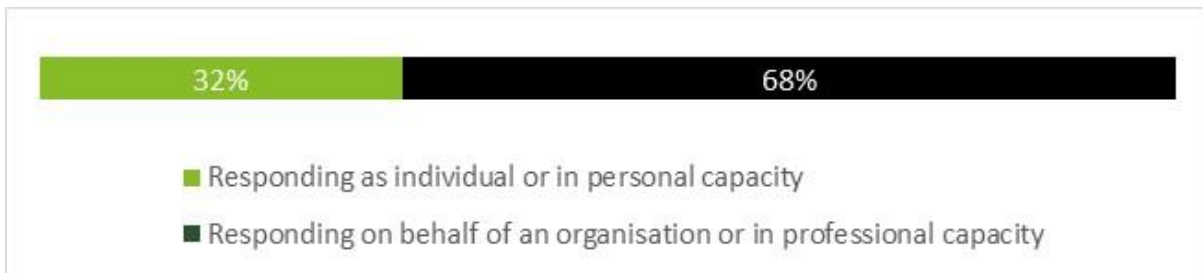
The Figure below shows a breakdown of the responding organisations' country of headquarters. More than one in four respondents in the Public Consultation on the EfCP stated Germany as country of residence (55 replies), followed by France which totalled 31 responses. The third most represented country was Italy. The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and the Republic of Serbia had one responding organisation each. There was also one reply stated the Republic of Serbia.

Figure 27: Country of organisation's headquarters (n=219)
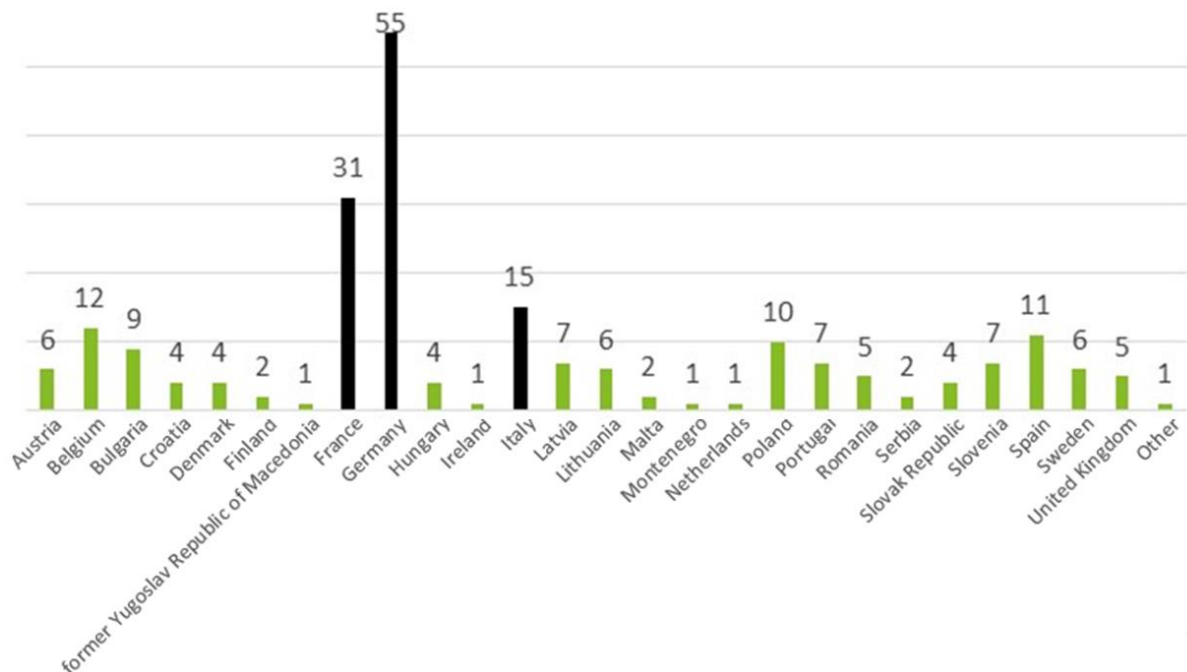
The respondents were then asked to specify the type of their organisation, as shown in the Figure below.

Figure 28: Type of organisations responding to Public Consultation survey (n=219)
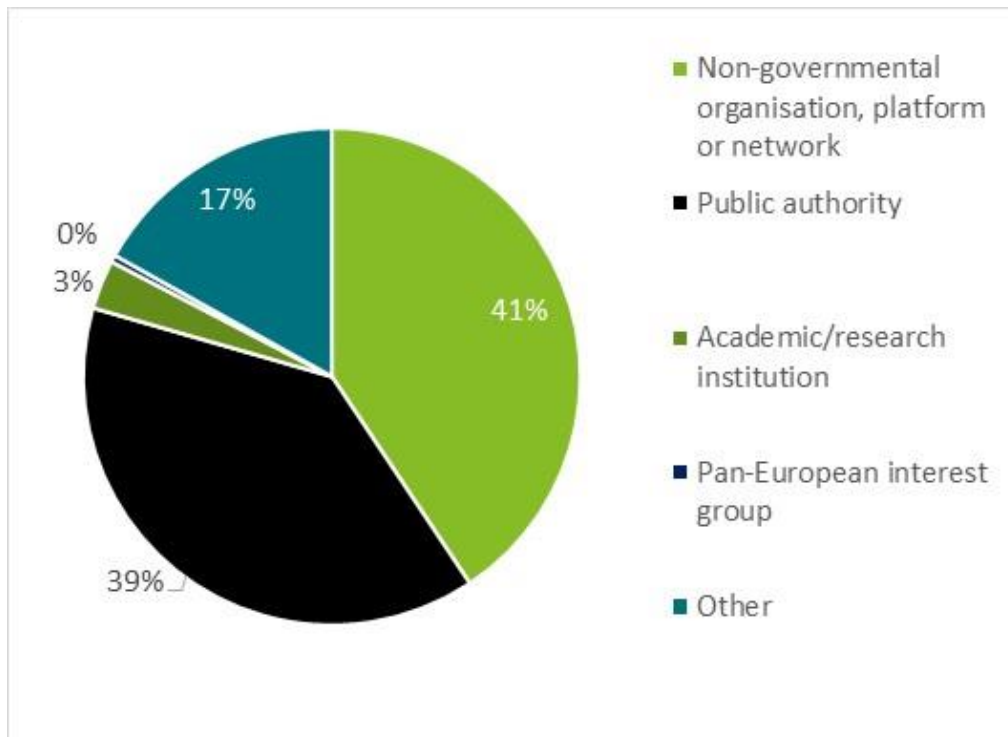
More than two thirds of the participating organisations stated they are either a non-governmental organisation, platform or network or a public authority (41% and 39% respectively). Significantly less noted they were an academic or research institutions and there was only one pan-European interest group. A total of 37 organisations identified themselves as *Other*. The details provided in their open responses notably included at least six Town-Twinning organisations, five associations of local/regional authorities and one National Contact Point (NCP) of EfCP.

Among those respondents completing the survey in their personal capacity or as individuals (32% as indicated in Figure 26, those residing in Italy were the most numerous by a significant margin, followed by respondents from France and Germany which were twice as less, as shown in Figure 27. Notably, one response was provided for each of the associated countries Montenegro and the Republic of Serbia. The two open responses for the category *Other* included a respondent from Kosovo and another from the Dominican Republic.
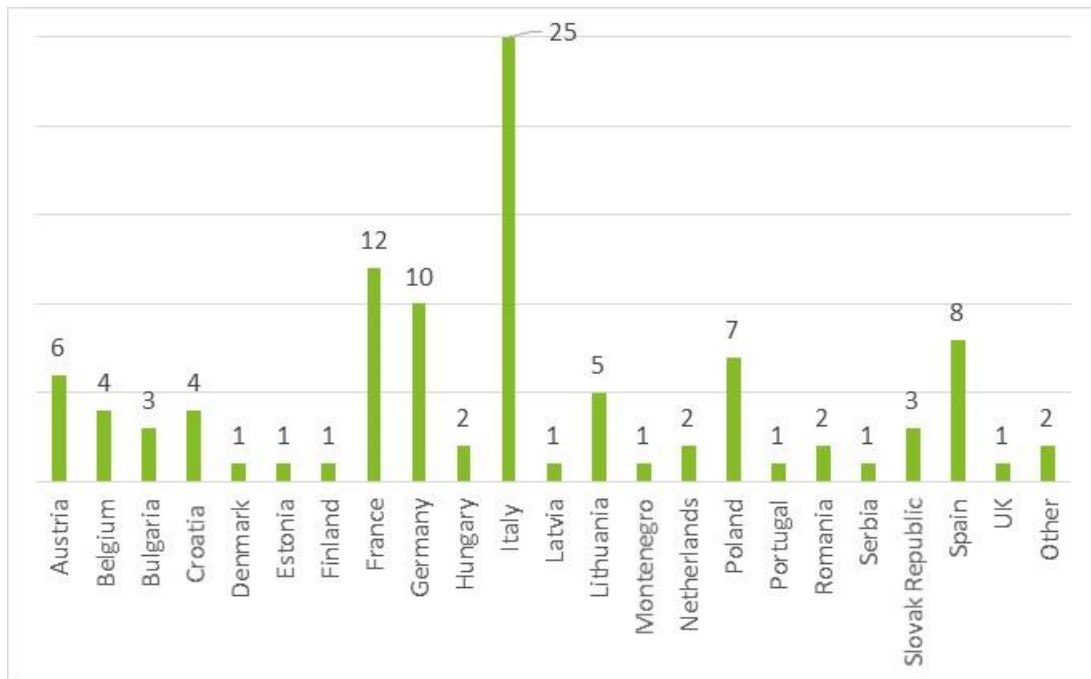
Figure 30 indicates that the participation in the survey in terms of age groups was fairly balanced among respondents who filled out the Public Consultation in their personal capacity. The respondents aged 30 to 44 years were slightly more numerous than the other age groups, whereas the respondents aged over 60 were the least represented in the sample.

Figure 30: Respondents' age group (n=103)
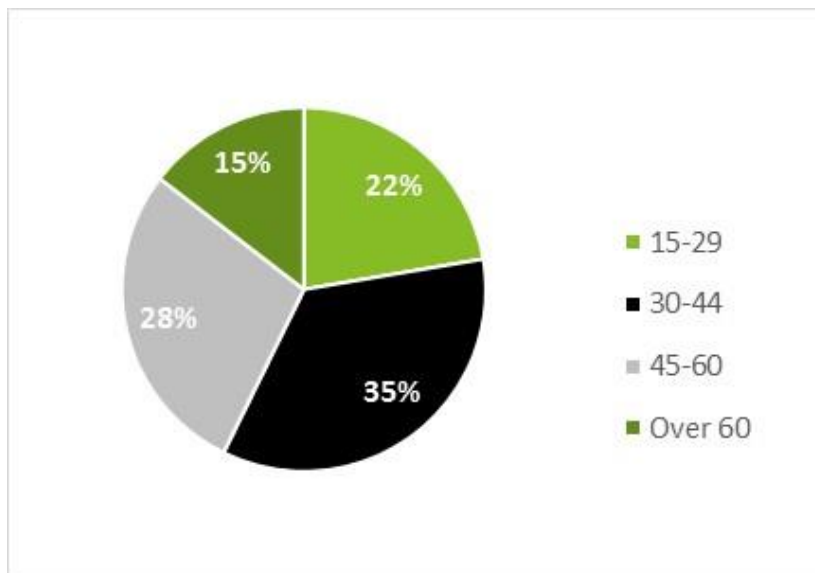
Awareness, experience and involvement in the EfCP and EU-related activities

The following paragraphs summarise the survey results for the questions relating to the respondents' awareness, experience and possible involvement in the EfCP and other EU-related activities.

As shown in Figure 31, the overall level of awareness of the EfCP among survey participants was very high, as more than eight out of ten reported that they had heard about the EfCP prior to their participation in the Public Consultation.

Figure 31: Prior awareness of survey participants of the EfCP (n=322)

| 87% | 10% | 3% |

■ Yes ■ No ▯ I'm not sure
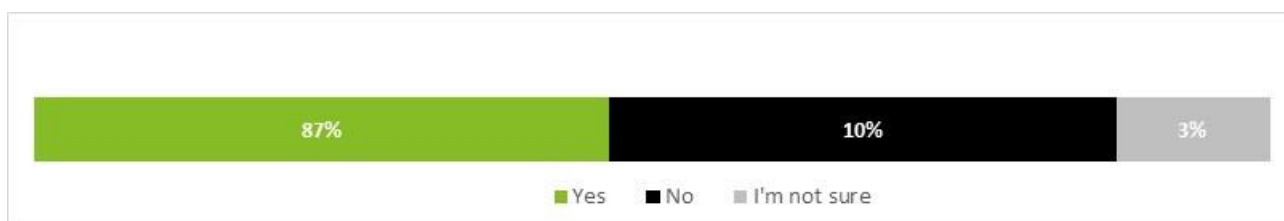
Figure 32 presents a breakdown of the main sources from which the survey respondents first found out about the EfCP. Almost half of all survey respondents initially heard about the programme from another organisation, a Europe for Citizens NCP or because they work in the local public sector (each of these options was selected by similar numbers of respondents). More than one in ten participants reported that they first learned about the EfCP upon attending a programme event or that they had come across the programme on a European Commission website (such as www.europa.eu). The least popular information sources were EU institutions and NGOs' social media networks and TV or radio. The open responses of those who stated they initially heard about the programme from another source (6%) included through university/studies, working for a beneficiary of the EfCP and through one's previous employment as EU civil servant.

Figure 32: Sources of information on the EfCP (n=322)
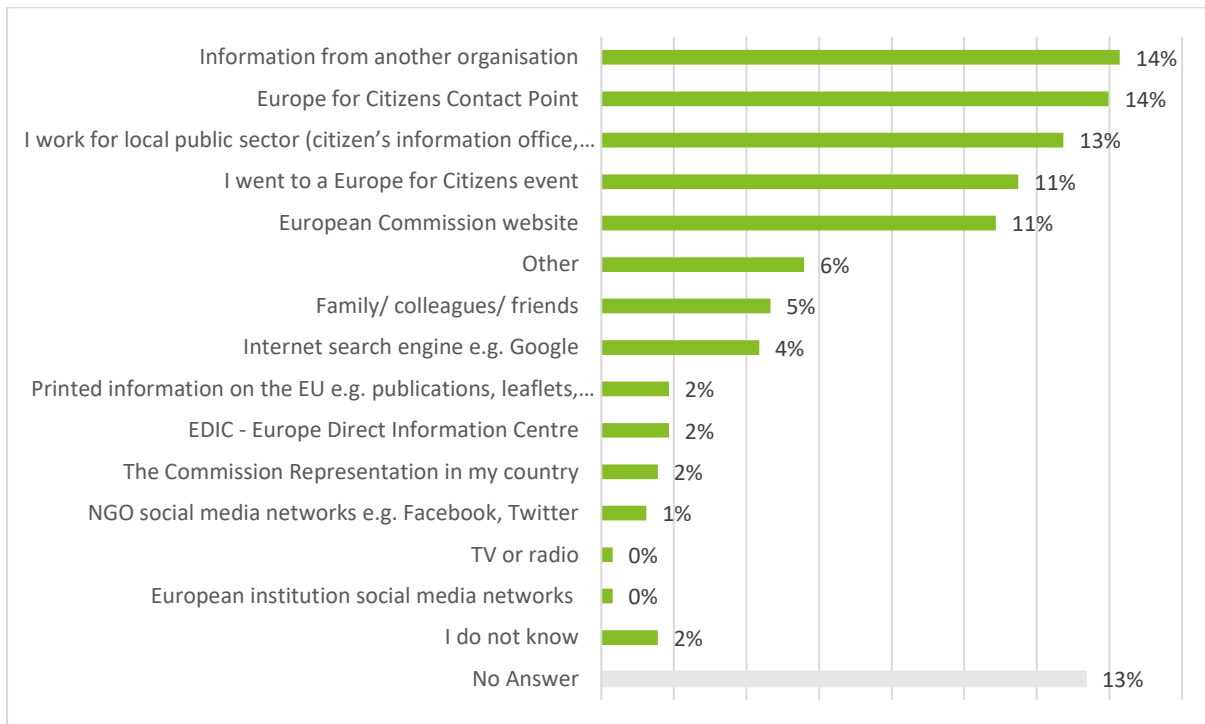
The participants to the Public Consultation were later asked to provide details on their experience with the EfCP by selecting one option from a number of suggestions. Figure 33 presents the responses given. Almost 40% of respondents stated that their organisation had received funding from the EfCP. More than one in six noted that they were aware of the programme but had no practical experience with it and slightly less reported that they knew of the EfCP because they had attended an event or participated in a project funded by the programme.

Figure 33: Experience of participants with the EfCP (n=322)
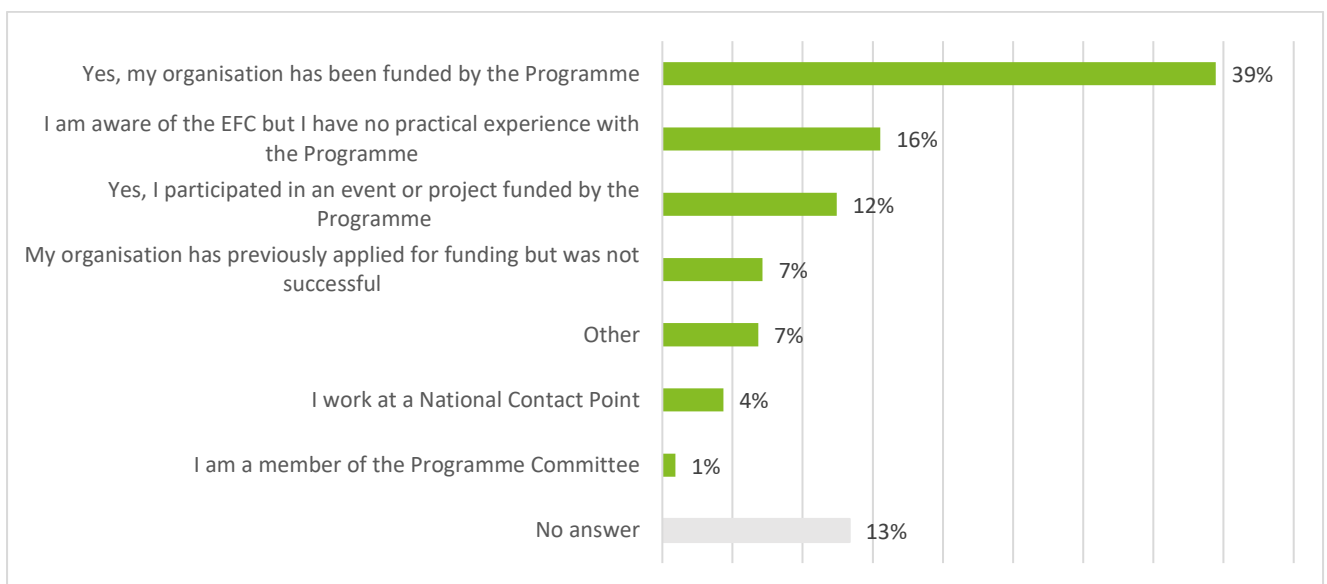
Proportionately, an important number of participants (13%) were unsure and did not provide an answer. A total of 22 respondents (7%) did not identify with any of the suggested responses. The analysis of the open replies uncovered prospective and current applicants, CSOs with an interest in the policy field and other interested parties, such as organisations acting as multipliers for the promotion of the programme on a local and regional level from two Member States.

The respondents to the Public Consultation were then asked about their general level of involvement in EU activities such as ability to voice their opinion on the EU, engagement in EU affairs and participation in the EU policy making process. Figure 34 presents the summary of the received responses. Two-thirds of all participants to the Public Consultation stated that they are well or adequately involved in EU-related activities. Only less than one in ten respondents reported not being involved at all.

Figure 34: Survey respondents' involvement in EU-related activities (n=322)
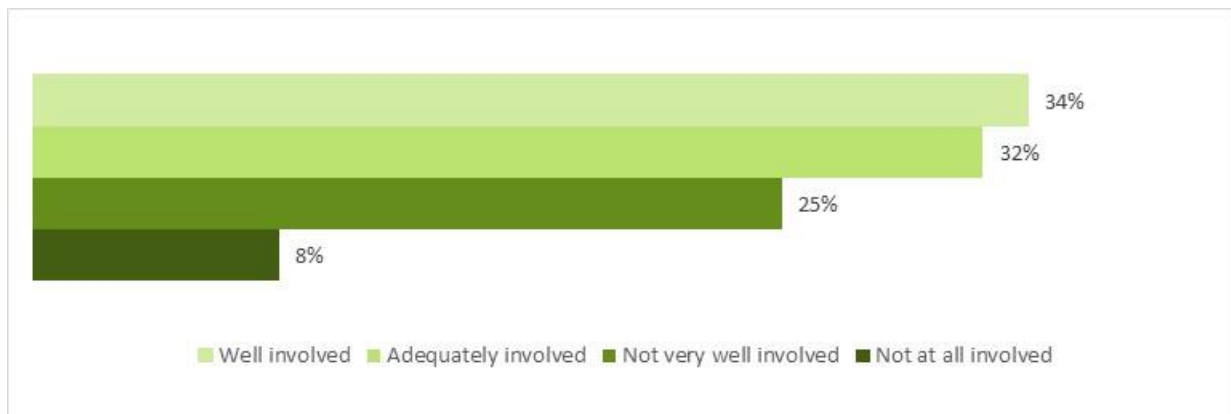
Importance of activities funded by EfCP for EU action

The respondents to the Public Consultation were asked to reflect on the importance of the different types of activities that the Programme funds for EU action. Their responses are shown in Figure 35. The participants appeared overall to assess all activities as important to a certain extent. The most relevant activity for EU action was considered to be the Civil Society Projects followed by the Networks of Towns, whereas the least important was the financing of Operating Grants.
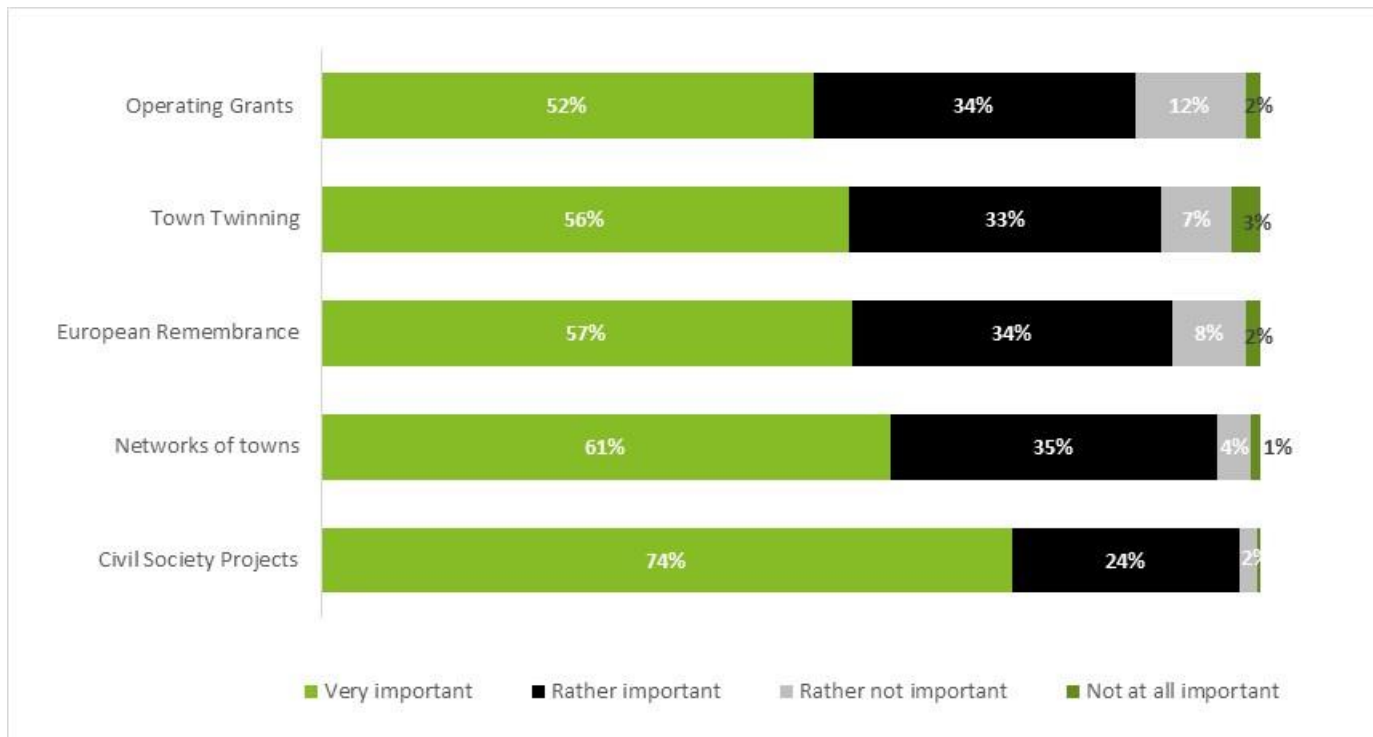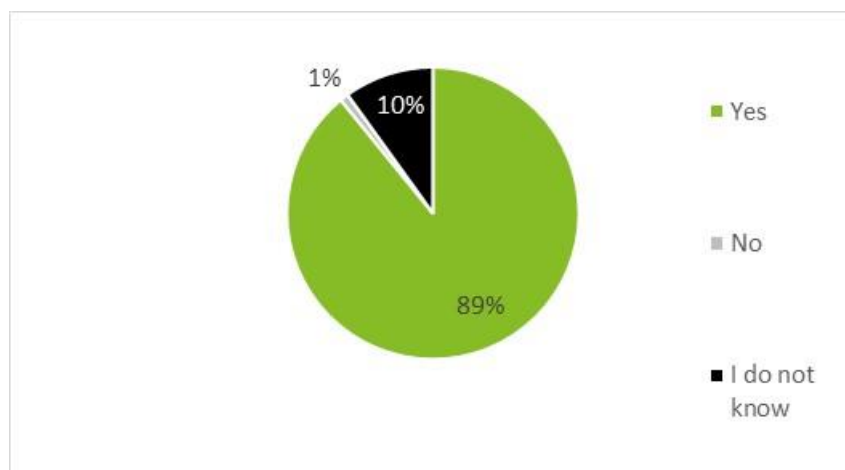
Interest in taking part in EfCP activities and effects of past participation

As shown in Figure 36, a large majority of the Public Consultation respondents were overall keen to participate in activities funded by the EfCP in the future. One in ten, however, replied negatively.

*Figure 36: Interest in participating in EfCP-funded activities in the future (n=322)*

For those respondents showing interest in taking part in future activities of the EFC, Figure 37 summarises the interest reported for each type of activity funded by the EfCP.

Participation in Civil Society Projects attracted the biggest interest from the respondents to the Public Consultation. This was also the activity that they deemed most important for EU-action (as shown in Figure 35 above). Almost half of the respondents who expressed an interest to participate in EfCP-funded activities were very interested in obtaining an Operating Grant or funding for Town-Twinning activities. This is somehow in contrast with the fact that Public Consultation respondents considered Operating Grants as the least important aspect of the EfCP for EU action. While the activities taking place under Networks of Town were deemed to be the second most important type of activity for EU action, it appears that Public Consultation respondents were attracted the least by participation in this programme area. For each activity, less than one in ten respondents stated no interest to participate at all.

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

Figure 37: Interest of respondents to participate in EfCP-funded activities in the future (n=322)
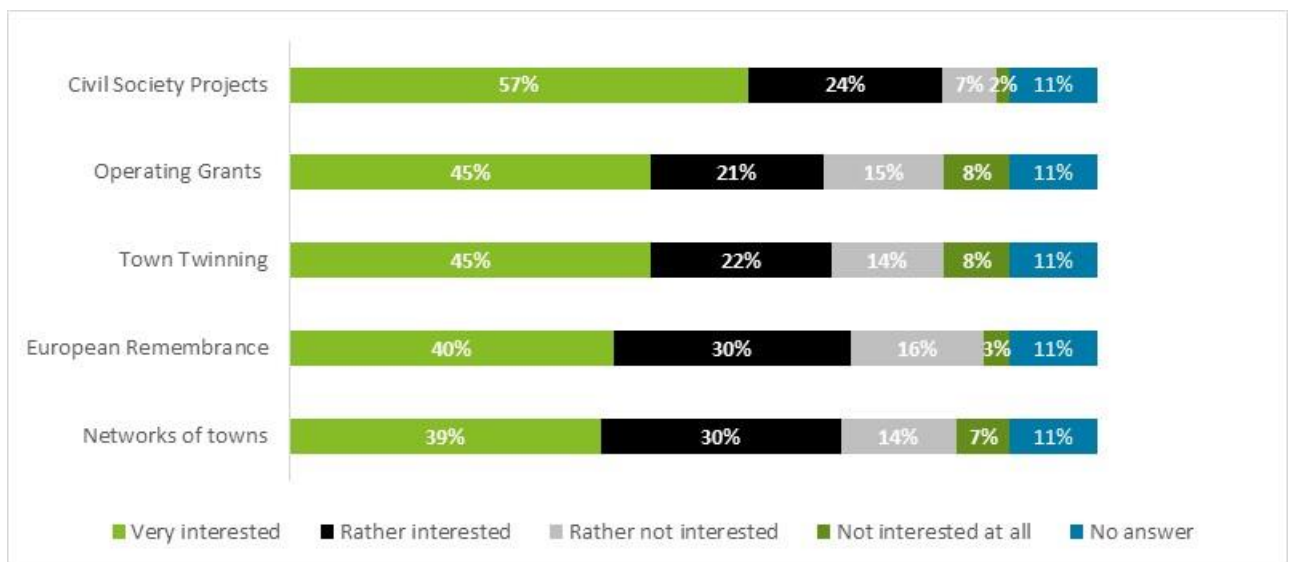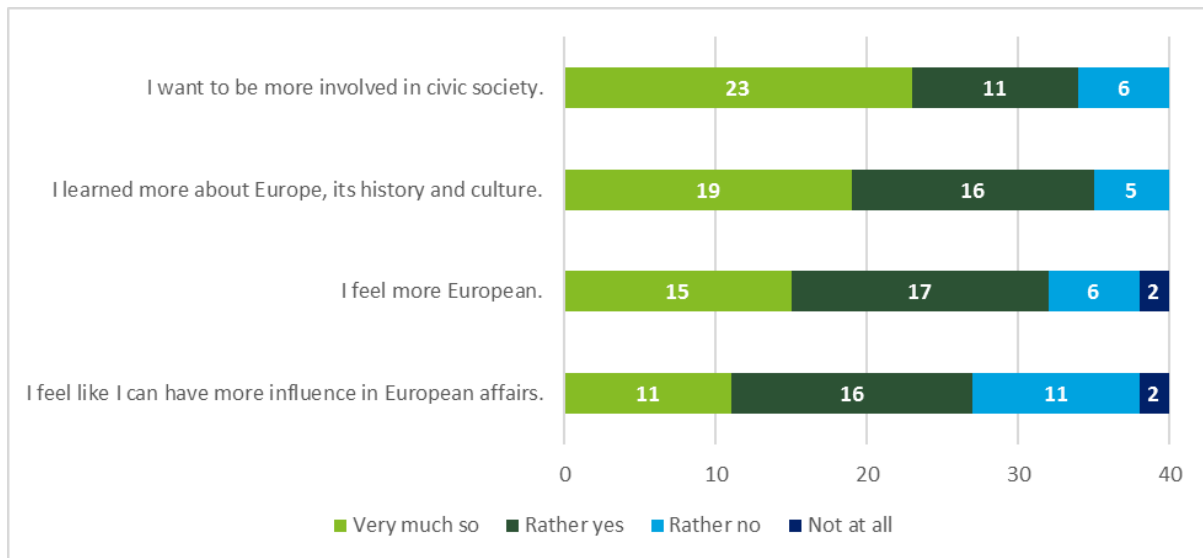

Finally, the respondent to the Public Consultation who had already been involved in activities financed through the EfCP were asked to comment on the effects of their participation in relation to four aspects of their relationship with European identity and the EU. As shown in Figure 38, more than two thirds of the respondents to this question reported that had felt some effects from the participation in EfCP activities.

Among the 40 respondents to this question, the effect of the participation in EfCP activities that was felt the strongest was that afterwards participants wanted to get more involved in civic society. A significant number also noted that they had learned more about Europe, its history and culture, and slightly less that they felt more European following their participation in the EfCP.

In relative terms, for the respondents the least powerful effect of their participation in EfCP activities appeared to be the feeling that they could have more influence in European affairs.

An open response was given by one respondent who felt that participation in the EfCP had enhanced their knowledge of their European neighbours.

Summary of open comments, contributions and position papers submitted to the Public Consultation

Respondents to the Public Consultation were finally given the opportunity to add any comments/suggestions as well as share any position papers expressing the views of their organisation regarding the EfCP. **A total of 102 comments and, 32 contributions** had been submitted. Below we outline the main comments and recommendations made by the respondents to the Public Consultation, grouped by key theme.

Programme objectives and priorities

- At the European level, the EfCP is perceived as dealing with important issues such as strengthening European citizenship, improving citizens' and democratic participation at EU level, and raising awareness of shared history and shared values.
- The EfC Programme is considered unique as it supports citizen-led projects in which ordinary citizens are the real protagonists of the action. It targets citizens of different age and social groups while putting particular emphasis on the participation of disadvantaged groups of people such as women, minorities, migrants and people with disabilities.
- It is felt that, in practice, the EfCP falls short to achieve its potential to bring the EU closer to its citizens and strengthen overall civic and democratic participation.
- The introduction of multi-annual priorities is considered a great improvement.
- While the priorities of the EfCP are generally perceived as adequate, it has been suggested that they could be adapted to support a broader range of projects specifically linked to European citizenship, such as actions to promote European values and policies, mobility, Intercultural discovery and best practices sharing at the local level.
- EfCP is highly important nowadays due to the political and societal context in most European countries. Especially 'Town-Twinning' actions.

Funding

- The funding is insufficient to match the ambitious objectives. Its current financial envelope of EUR 185.5 m , despite its distinctiveness in contributing to the European project, is extremely marginal if compared to programmes such as Creative Europe (1.46 bn) and Erasmus+ (14.7 bn). It is suggested by many stakeholders that the budget is increased at least to the symbolic "one euro per citizen", thus raising the budget to EUR 500 m.
- The maximum funding rates per project are thought to be low.
- Low success rates lead to frustration of applicants and an overall negative image of the programme.
- The current financing system does not take into account the differences between Member States in terms of geographical distances and cost of living.
- Constant increase of costs to accommodate the needs of and expectations from the project.
- It is common that projects rely on volunteering to cover additional occurring costs.
- Although it requires many partners to be involved, the financial support per involved partner remains small.
- Dissemination activities (which guarantees sustainability) of the projects needs separate lump sum.

Civil Dialogue Group

- There were a few suggestions to reform the Civil Dialogue into a permanent structured dialogue and a platform of discussion between beneficiaries, the European Commission and National Contact Points (NCPs).
- Not only to discuss the priorities of the Programme, but also, the policy developments in the fields of democratic engagement, civic participation and citizenship in general, as well as the proportion of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) dedicated to it.

Administration

- The EfCP has been and remains a pioneer in the application of simplified financial procedures, such as the introduction of the lump-sum approach.
- The overall administrative burden to applicants and beneficiaries is lighter compared to other EU spending programmes.
- Beneficiaries would like to be supported more effectively in their search for project partners within the Programme e.g. through a central online platform.

Application and evaluation process

- The selection process but also the competencies of the evaluators and therefore the liability of the evaluation results was questioned.
- It is difficult to address the size of the applied partnership.
- High workload for applying and high risk of rejection.

Operating Grants

- Many stakeholders advocate for this line of funding to be maintained, as it provides a minimum of stability and an opportunity of long-term planning to organisations which are essential to the development of civil society and operate in a difficult financial climate.
- Some stakeholder organisations question the eligibility of think tanks and research organisations to financing in the form of an Operating Grant. It is thought that they have an easier access to other forms of financing.

Directorate-General in charge of EfCP

- The current compartmentalisation of EU citizenship policies across different DGs (HOME, JUST, EAC, COMM, including the Secretariat-General) is weakening the programme. This makes it problematic to identify one interlocutor for EU citizenship policies, thereby negatively affecting the programme's understanding and visibility compared to other programmes that are assigned to a particular DG.
- The change of responsibility from DG COMM to DG HOME is not considered as positive. Some organisations would welcome a shift in responsibility from DG HOME to DG EAC, where the EfCP was hosted originally because of its obvious links to culture policy.
- It is suggested that the Citizenship departments across different DGs are bundled together.

Role of the European Parliament

- It is suggested that for the next programming period, the European Commissionaddresses the issue of the legal base enabling the European Parliament to be involved in the adoption of the programme as a co-legislator under the ordinary legislative procedure. Several stakeholders estimate that the European Parliament must be able to play its role as legislator for a special programme created with the aim of strengthening the links between Europe and the citizens it represents.

Promotion and visibility

- The programme clearly lacks the communication for it to be better known and increase a diverse participation rate. A one-stop-shop platform bringing together all the information related to this programme as well as other actions, grants and structural funds that come under the umbrella of European Citizenship (i.e. ECI, European Voluntary Service) could be useful.
- Lack of promotion and therefore, limited visibility of the EfCP does not guarantee the involvement of all relevant stakeholders.
- The Programme should pay closer attention to the media, as the media environment has proven to be an essential component of political and social participation.
- It is suggested that long-term synergies with Erasmus+ programme should be considered.