EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

PROJECT	
Project name and acronym:	EU citizens: Citizens from local communities - the value of the EU
Participant:	Zavod za kulturno dejavnost, produkcijo, trženje in promocijo Boter (Zavod Boter)
PIC number:	907602714

EVENT DESCRIPTION			
Event number :	1		
Event name:	INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE “CITIZENS FROM LOCAL COMMUNITIES – THE VALUE OF THE EU”		
Type:	Conference		
In situ/online:	In situ		
Location:	Novo mesto, Slovenia		
Date(s):	20. – 23. 9. 2026		
Website(s) (if any):	-		
Participants			
Female:	107		
Male:	63		
Non-binary:	-		
From country 1 [Slovenia]:	35		
From country 2 [Croatia]:	63		
From country 3 [Serbia]:	49		
From country 4 [Bulgaria]:	12		
From country 5 [Malta]:	4		
From country 6 [Greece]:	4		
From country 7 [Italy]:	3		
Total number of participants:	170	From total number of countries:	7
Description			

Provide a short description of the event and its activities.

The international conference **"Citizens from Local Communities – The Value of the EU"** successfully brought together **170** participants from seven European countries — Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Bulgaria, Malta, Greece and Italy. Of these, **135** were international participants travelling from the partner countries and 35 were local participants. The event connected representatives of partner organisations and municipalities, young people, local stakeholders and members of the local community, creating a space for dialogue on European values, sustainable mobility and the role of citizens in building a common European future.

The conference demonstrated that European values – solidarity, cultural diversity, mutual understanding and active participation – become meaningful when they are lived by citizens in their everyday communities. Through the official conference session, presentations of the partner countries and towns, the participation in the European **Car-Free Day**, study visits to local examples of good practice and a guided tour of Novo mesto, participants explored how local action in the fields of sustainable mobility, sustainability and social inclusion contributes to wider European change.

The central day of the event was deliberately held on 22 September 2026, the Car-Free Day within **European Mobility Week 2026**. In this way, the project linked the dialogue on European values with a concrete, Europe-wide initiative for sustainable mobility and enabled the international participants to experience it first-hand together with the local community of Novo mesto.

The event opened on Sunday, 20 September 2026, with the arrival and accommodation of the international delegations at the Hotel Pri Belokranjcu in Novo mesto, followed by a joint dinner, which gave participants from different countries the first opportunity to meet one another in an informal setting.

On Monday, 21 September 2026, participants got to know the local community through examples of good practice. At the **GRM Centre of Biotechnics and Tourism**, they were given a tour and presentation of the entire centre. The hosts presented their sustainable **"from field to table"** concept: the centre runs its own restaurant, where almost everything on the menu, including the drinks, comes from the centre's own production. The presentation covered the development of organic farming, viticulture and livestock breeding, and the visit concluded with a wine tasting and lunch.

In the afternoon, participants visited a **local nursing home**, where they were introduced to an inspiring good practice in elderly care and community inclusion. The home presented its programmes and projects connecting different age groups, including workshops that are open to groups from outside the home, who take part in them together with the residents. The hosts also presented home-care assistance for older people in Novo mesto and the home's cooperation with various organisations, which opened a discussion on intergenerational solidarity and the inclusion of older people in community life.

On Tuesday, 22 September 2026, the central conference day, participants walked from their accommodation to the Main Square, putting sustainable mobility into practice, and were joined by the Croatian delegation, which travelled to Novo mesto for the central day. On the Main Square, they took part in the **Car-Free Day** event, where organisations from Novo mesto and the surrounding area – including schools, public institutions, the Police and the Slovenian Armed Forces – presented their work at information stands. Among them were the stands of Zavod Boter and the EU citizens project, which presented the project, its partners and its objectives to the visitors.

The conference session took place in the banquet hall of Gostišče Na trgu. It was officially opened by **Ester Snedec**, project manager at Zavod Boter, who emphasised that European values become meaningful when they are lived by citizens in their everyday communities, and that Europe is built through people – in local communities, schools, associations, municipalities and through the everyday choices of citizens. **Ms Sara Tomšič, Deputy Mayor of the City Municipality of Novo mesto**, spoke about the importance of European values and sustainable mobility, about the efforts of Novo mesto to become as sustainable a town as possible, and about European Mobility Week and Car-Free Day.

Andraž Prus then presented the EU citizens project and the CERV Programme, including its pillar on citizens' engagement and participation and the Town Twinning measure. He outlined the partnership, the needs analysis carried out with more than thirty local stakeholders, the project objectives and methodology, the shared mobility challenges of the partner countries, the planned multiplier events and the expected impact of the project. Each partner then presented its **country, municipality and hometown** and spoke about mobility and sustainability in its local community, about European values and about the importance of cooperation and connections between European towns. The presentations enabled a direct comparison of local experiences and an exchange of good practices among the seven communities.

The conference session was followed by a joint lunch. In the afternoon, the international participants staying in Novo mesto took part in a guided tour of the town, while the Croatian delegation visited the **Herbal Centre Škocjan**. During the tour of the herb garden, the hosts presented their educational programme and their work in preserving natural and cultural heritage and spoke about medicinal and useful plants – a topic of particular interest to the Croatian delegation, whose members come from a rural environment.

On Wednesday, 23 September 2026, the event concluded with breakfast, free time and the departure of the international delegations.

A short evaluation was carried out with the participants. More than **90 %** of the participants expressed great satisfaction with the content presented during the event. They were particularly impressed by the examples of good practice at the GRM Centre of Biotechnics and Tourism and at the nursing home.

The planned music concert could not be carried out. The cultural and intercultural dimension of the event was ensured through the partners' presentations of their countries and towns, the joint participation in the Car-Free Day on the Main Square, the guided tour of Novo mesto, the study visits and the informal gatherings of participants throughout the event.

A joint **Memorandum of Cooperation** was prepared to ensure the continuation of cooperation among the partners beyond the end of the project. As the legal representatives of the partner organisations who are authorised to sign it were not present in Novo mesto, the Memorandum could not be signed at the event. A single joint copy of the Memorandum is therefore being circulated among all partner organisations, so that the same document is signed by all partners.

Consistent with the project's objectives, particular attention was given to intergenerational cooperation, social inclusion and the involvement of young people and local citizens. The event strengthened cooperation between local authorities and civil society organisations from EU Member States and a candidate country, while the participation in the Car-Free Day ensured visibility of the project, the CERV Programme and the values of solidarity, sustainability and European cooperation within the local community. The conclusions and experiences of the event will be transferred to the partners' local communities through multiplier events in all partner countries.

Schedule:

SUNDAY, 20.9.2026

- By 19:00: Arrival of international participants and accommodation at the Hotel Pri Belokranjcu, Novo mesto.
- 19:00: Dinner.

MONDAY, 21.9.2026

- Morning: Breakfast and transfer to the GRM Centre of Biotechnics and Tourism.
- Study visit to the GRM Centre of Biotechnics and Tourism: tour and presentation of the entire centre and its "from field to table" concept, wine tasting and lunch.
- 14:30: Transfer to the nursing home.
- Study visit to the nursing home: presentation of good practice in elderly care, intergenerational programmes and community inclusion.
- Free time until 19:00.
- 19:00: Dinner.

TUESDAY, 22.9.2026 – CAR-FREE DAY, EUROPEAN MOBILITY WEEK

- Morning: Breakfast and walk to the Main Square; arrival of the Croatian delegation.
- 10:00 – 11:00: Participation in the Car-Free Day on the Main Square:
    - Information stands of organisations from Novo mesto and the surrounding area – schools, public institutions, the Police, the Slovenian Armed Forces and others.
    - Stand of Zavod Boter and the EU citizens project.
- 11:00 – 12:30: Conference session, banquet hall of Gostišče Na trgu, Glavni trg 30, Novo mesto:
    - Welcome address by Ester Snedec, project manager, Zavod Boter.
    - Address by Ms Sara Tomšič, Deputy Mayor of the City Municipality of Novo mesto.
    - Presentation of the EU citizens project and the CERV Programme – Andraž Prus.
    - Presentations of the partner countries, municipalities and towns.
- 12:30 – 14:00: Lunch, Gostišče Na trgu.

- Afternoon: Guided tour of Novo mesto for the international participants staying in Novo mesto.
- 14:00 – 16:30: Croatian delegation – transfer to and visit of the Herbal Centre Škocjan with a tour of the herb garden, followed by the return home.
- 19:00: Dinner.

WEDNESDAY, 23.9.2026

- Morning: Breakfast and free time.
- Departure of participants.

Media Coverage and Social Networks

- https://zavodboter.org/2026/10/28/citizens-from-local-communities-the-value-of-the-eu-four-days-of-european-encounters-in-novo-mesto/
- https://zavodboter.org/2026/10/28/different-towns-shared-questions-what-the-eu-citizens-conference-brought-to-its-participants/
- https://zavodboter.org/2026/10/28/car-free-day-and-the-eu-citizens-event-europe-on-the-main-square-of-novo-mesto/
- https://zavodboter.org/2026/10/28/seven-countries-meet-in-novo-mesto-the-eu-citizens-conference-begins-with-local-good-practices/
- https://www.lag-prizag.hr/lag-prizag-na-projektu-eu-citizens-u-novom-mestu/
- https://www.facebook.com/BoterInstitute/posts/1126709043439089
- https://www.facebook.com/BoterInstitute/posts/1129857033124290
- https://www.instagram.com/p/De_2uCTis0y/
- https://www.instagram.com/p/DfH0e-OgVUG/
- https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1379187511078880&id=100069629331977&ref=embed_post

Conclusion
The main message of the event remains clear: **European values become real when citizens meet, listen to one another and act together in their local communities**. By connecting 167 citizens from seven countries through dialogue, the exchange of good practices and the shared experience of the European Car-Free Day, “EU citizens” strengthened trust, friendship and cooperation among the participating communities and created a solid foundation for future joint initiatives in the fields of sustainable mobility, sustainability and social inclusion in Novo mesto and across Europe.




EU CITIZENS
EU Citizens





HISTORY OF CHANGES		
VERSION	PUBLICATION DATE	CHANGE
1.0	01.04.2022	Initial version (new MFF).