



**Effective Social Integration of mobile EU citizens - EnVISION**  
**EnVISION**



**Activity 2.7 Design of 5 Social Inclusion Activities that foster active participation (per participating country)**

**Work Package 2 (Deliverable 2.7)**

**REPORT 4: Voluntary Actions**

**Helping Hand**

Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme

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## 1. Introduction - The EnVision project

The aim of the EnVision project is to introduce mobile EU citizens to the Public Consultation Process, during the formulation of local interventions, emphasizing on educational and social activities, including unrepresented persons such as women and young people. This is going to be achieved through the development of a reasonable, adaptable methodology for the sustainable promotion of active participation of mobile EU citizens in local societies.

The objectives of the EnVision project are established in a wo-way process, aiming to:

- Foster the successful inclusion and participation of mobile EU citizens and their family members in the host EU country's civic and political life, as well as their participation in the democratic life of the EU
- Increase the capacity of the Public Administration Authorities & Experts in local level, in the participating countries to enable and facilitate the participation of mobile EU citizens in their host Member-State
- Improve the availability, awareness and participation of mobile EU citizens in civic activities in their host communities

Expected results of the Envision project:

- Direct involvement of EU mobile citizens to the Public Consultation Process.
- Increased participation of EU mobile citizens in the political and social life of their host communities.
- Increased capacity of experts in local level in the participating countries to enable and facilitate the participation of mobile EU citizens in their host Member State.
- Improved acceptance of mobile EU citizens into activities organized and implemented at a local level.

The project is funded by Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme of the European Commission and is implemented by:



- AKMI S.A (AKMI) – Greece
- Central Union of Greek Municipalities (KEDE) – Greece
- Astiki Mh Kersoskopiki Etareia Helping Hand (HELPING HAND) – Greece
- Union of Cyprus Municipalities (UCM) - Cyprus
- ZEWELEPE Consultants Limited (ZEWELEPE) - Cyprus



## 2. Structure of the deliverable

The purpose of this report is to test the functionality and effectiveness of our two – way approach methodology using the public consultation. Under the Activity 2.7, the Envision Partnership, with the guidance of Helping Hand, piloted five (5) different educational and social activities encouraging the active participation of mobile EU citizens in local societies. Our pilot included the preparation of local Initiatives that enhanced the active participation. We established 5 groups of Activities, using this new Consultation Methodology, focusing on the following 5 thematic areas:

Figure 1 Design of 5 Activities in the areas of:



This Report provides the documentation for the fourth activity: ‘Voluntary Actions’.

The structure of this deliverable contains the following elements:

Chapter 3 provides a description of the proposed Activity. It contains an analysis of the decision of the most appropriate public consultation process, related to the Activity and it describes the Consultation Documents used to support this activity, by offering a description of the Activity and the documents for the implementation of the consultation process.

Moreover, the specific implementation timeline and the finalization of the content of the proposed Activities, taking into consideration and including the results of the Public Consultation. Finally the feedback received is presented.

The design of all planned 5 Social Inclusion activities, follows this procedure:



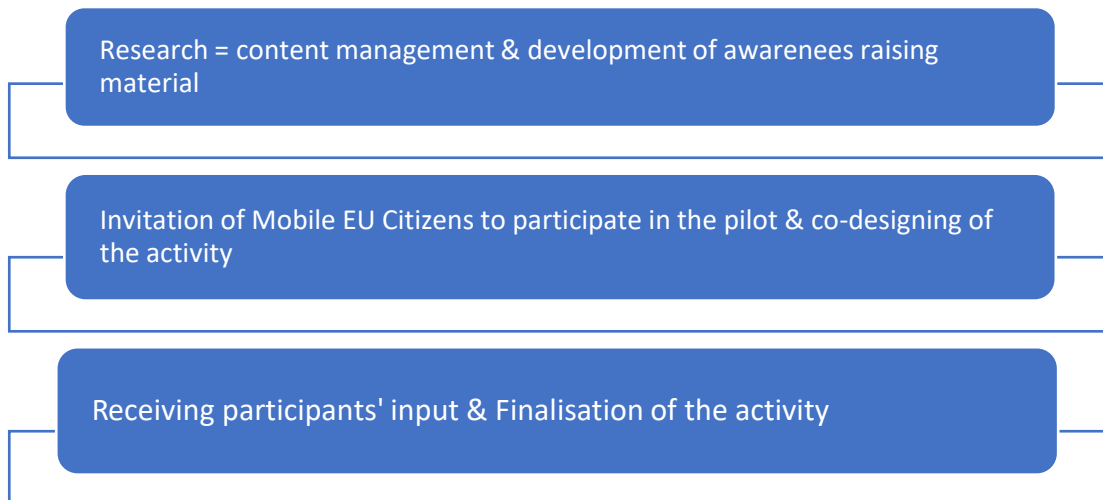
1. Identification of Stakeholders, aiming to prepare the cooperation structures between stakeholders and mobile EU citizens, by establishing an active communication channel among them, during the preparation of the Activities; To this end, the Envision Consortium has concluded a mapping of stakeholders from various categories, which is presented only to the Project Officer, since it contains sensitive and personal data.
2. Decision of the most appropriate public consultation process, related to each proposed Activity;
3. Preparation of Consultation Documents, including i) a detailed description of the planned Activities, that are going to be presented to mobile EU citizens ii) standard documents for the implementation of the consultation process;
4. Establishment of the consultation process with a specific implementation timeline and monitoring of results;
5. Finalizing of the content of the proposed Activities, taking into consideration and including the results of the Public Consultation;
6. Provision of feedback to stakeholders and especially to mobile EU citizens, so that they get assured that their opinion is being valued and included in the designed Activities.

The finalized Educational and Social Activities are going to be input for Activity 2.8.



### 3. Description of the proposed Activity

This Activity was designed in consultation with mobile EU citizens that have been attending as participants the Activity 2.6. The main steps for the designing phase are presented below:



The main aim of the pilot of this Activity was to design in consultation with the EU mobile citizens an activity that impact the level of their voluntary participation at the local level, through asking for their input. The participants' feedback was requested and for the implementation of the Activity we had asked if any of them would be willing to participate in a video, through story-telling and sharing of personal experiences.

Helping Hand, acting as the lead partner of this activity, aimed to understand the perception of either newcomers or longer establish citizens, based on their experiences in the host society. In the same time, we had to respect and remember the fact that the involvement in voluntary actions relies and depends on several factors, such as the available free time, the financial situation of a person and many other restrictions. Therefore, we carefully proposed some guidelines for the implementation of the activities, based on the feedback of the interested people. The main rationale of this pilot was to point out the driving factors behind the voluntary participation at the local level.





### 3.1 Decision of the most appropriate public consultation process

To achieve the goal of selecting the most appropriate public consultation process, we introduced our participants to each consultation method. A Power Point Presentation was created, with the aim to provide the most important aspects of the public consultation procedures and methods. This Presentation displays the essentials of the consultation methods, as initially found and presented in our Best Practices Report.

### 3.2 Preparation of Consultation Documents, including:

#### i) Detailed description of the Activity, that is going to be presented to mobile EU citizens

Our research team, taking into account the particularities of the voluntary involvement and participation, especially for our target group, performed research on the suggested topic. Based on our findings and taking into consideration that the civic engagement in the host society affects the integration of the EU mobile citizens, we made the distinction of the various participatory methods in the society. At that point, it was essential to distinct among the main types of participation, since most of them include the topic of the consultation. Usually citizens' participation is measured as political engagement, but our team made a huge effort to concentrate on the voluntary aspect of participation. We also emphasized to the different types and the goal of the citizens' engagement and its impact on the community. Our research also included the benefits of the volunteerism, according to studies. Moreover, embarking from the Council of Europe Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at Local Level recommendation that "Each Party shall endeavour to ensure that reasonable efforts are made to involve foreign residents in public inquiries, planning procedures and other processes of consultation on local matters" we continued the dialogue. A power point presentation was created, based on our research. So, based on all the theoretical aspect, that was provided to the participants we wanted to ask them to freely choose the most appropriate public consultation process, and list the 10 main questions and answers that an EU mobile citizen would need, in order to volunteer in Greece and Cyprus. Our design put the personal experiences of the participants into the center of our approach in shaping the activities. The timeplan is presented below.



Our design process methodology relied on promoting an innovative approach and since innovation is perceived as a result of a process of actions, which evolve around feedback loops.

#### ii) Standard documents for the implementation of the consultation process.

We informed our participants that Public Consultation contains the following elements:

**1/. Notification:** It involves the communication of information on regulatory decisions to the public. Notification does not, itself, constitute consultation, but can be a first step. In this view, prior notification allows stakeholders the time to prepare themselves for upcoming consultations.

**2/. Consultation:** It involves actively seeking the opinions of interested and affected groups.

**3/. Participation:** It is the active involvement of interest groups in the formulation of regulatory objectives, policies and approaches, or in the drafting of regulatory texts.<sup>1</sup>

Aiming to set a common understanding we also provided an overview of the Consultation methods. Moreover, a detailed briefing on public consultation methods was given, based on the PPT presentation.

### 3.3 Establishment of the consultation process with a specific implementation timeline and monitoring of results.

The Envision Consortium, under the leading of Helping Hand, agreed on the following timeframe: The preparatory work should be made by the end of December 2020. The pilot of the first Activity took place on December 2020 and continued with some targeted actions during January 2021.

### 3.4 Finalizing of the content of the proposed Activities

The most important aim of the pilot of this Activity was to discuss and define the concepts of civic participation, volunteerism, engagement in the community and then get the participant's view through the process of story-telling and experience sharing the local level.

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<sup>1</sup> OECD, Background Document on Public Consultation, Retrieved from: <https://www.oecd.org/mena/governance/36785341.pdf>



The most crucial part was to give the space to the EU mobile citizens to share their experiences and discuss upon already existing practices.

### **Organisation of the Pilots**

Our first pilot took place on December, 2, 2020. AKMI and Helping Hand, with the collaboration of the rest partners, hosted the virtual meeting, via the Zoom platform, which firstly focused on the Training Course and elaboration of the main topics related to the public consultation. After we had provided the participants with the specific theoretical background, we had asked them to provide us with their input. On 25<sup>th</sup> of January 2021, we organized a 30 minutes online event, in order to finalise the activity, through the development of a common list with questions and answers on the topic. More details on the second pilot are being presented later.

### **The profile of participants**

The participants were mobile EU citizens who reside in Greece and Cyprus and who have already participated in the Envision training, which is available in the Moodle platform: <https://elearning.project-envision.eu/> . All of them were motivated and interested to discuss the suggested topic. In the early beginning of our online session, we informed them that we could communicate either in English or Greek. However, the vast majority spoke English, so we contacted the session in English.

### **Facilitators– 1<sup>st</sup> Pilot**

For the pilot, the Project Coordinator Ms Popi Christopoulou with Ms Chrysa Psyllaki, facilitated the process and the discussion.

### **The programme flow – 1<sup>st</sup> Pilot**

The participants of 02/12/2020 started giving their input at 18.10pm for 10 minutes.(up to 18.20pm). In total, 49 participants attended this online pilot, which followed the implementation of the pilot of the first activity about language and the general discussion on the Envision Course. Taking advantage of the different types of associations consisting of EU mobile citizens' in the host societies, we initiated an interesting discussion and we asked the question presented above and had a fruitful discussion, aiming to receive the



participants' feedback. The exchange of views among the participants took place, through the chat forum.

It came up as one of the conclusions that not all the people are aware of associations that consist of EU mobile citizens in their region, however a big proportion of the participants are members of EU mobile associations, consisting of people of their country of origin. Under their participation, many of them have done voluntary activities at the local level.

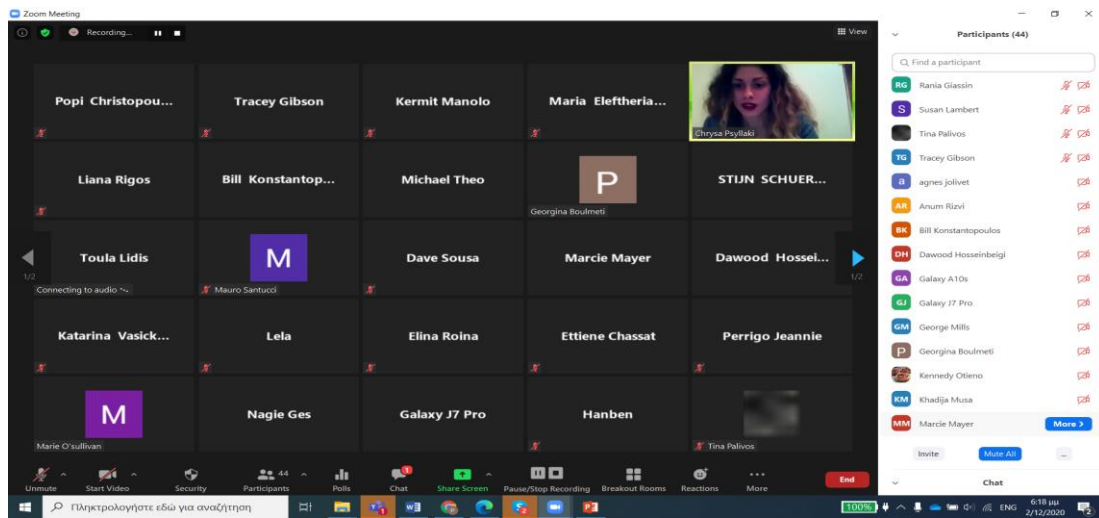


Figure 2 Pilot, Online Event, 02.12.2020

#### 4. Provision of feedback from stakeholders

The participants commented that the most preferred public consultation method for this activity should be the informal consultation, through face-to-face meetings with the public authorities of their region. The participants shared their experience from the participation in voluntary actions. Receiving the feedback from the interested parties laid on the following parameters:

- **Review:** Reviewing the current situation, (reflect on questions, such as: How does language learning take place now, what should change at the local level)
- **Analysis:** Analyse the existing local practices and similar activities they have attended.
- **Planning:** What activities do they believe are mandatory to take place at the local level?



- Implementation: Co-decision of the appropriate consultation methods and designing of the activity to be implemented at the local level.



The Main Outcomes of our Pilot:

We managed to receive some responses, which are being presented in the below table:

Summary of the participants' input
The new concept of citizenship includes the increased participation of citizens in the decision making. However, it is considered by most of the EU mobile citizens that the voluntary activity at the local level is not encouraged by the local society. Many of them would prefer if their Municipality called them upon discussing for the formulation of a dialogue, in order to co-develop such an activity.
Some stressed that the personality of each person, their culture and the perception from voluntary activities in their country of origin, can lead to either a passionate and active involvement or a discouragement and withdrawal, the same way it happens with other situations in life.
Volunteer organisations, associations of expats were seen by many as the leading examples for promoting voluntary activities at the local level, while ensuring the involvement of EU mobile citizens.



<p>Although, some people mentioned that they were reluctant in joining some organisations which act at the local level, due to either the values they present or some stories they have heard that they do not fulfil the purpose for which they were created.</p>
<p>The mistrust to the local authorities was also mentioned as a hindrance for the design of effective voluntary actions. Therefore, one participant proposed that this gap should be filled by the establishment of a local body, consisting of EU mobile citizens, who could meet monthly and propose voluntary activities, based on the region’s actual needs (e.g assisting the homeless people).</p>
<p>One participant stressed that difficulties in joining the labor market in the host society do not allow him, even to reflect how he could contribute to voluntary actions, although he has plenty of free time.</p>
<p>Some mentioned that they did not know about the existence of organizations who promote voluntary actions, so the solution should be to create a Council of representatives and organize meetings with the aim to inform the rest of the citizens about the types of civic involvement and decide which activities would promote a better living in the host society.</p>
<p>Some proposed the effectiveness of some social media pages and accounts of Municipalities, which could be further used except for updating the citizens on local news for more purposes, such as providing a virtual community to discuss voluntary activities.</p>

*Table 1 Input – Storytelling & Experience sharing: Voluntary actions in the host society*

During our discussion, we wanted to examine if they have prior experience from participating in voluntary activities in the past, even at their own countries. We received many positive replies, but a large proportion of the participants had not such an experience, especially as it regards the host society. In the following figure, we present the main thematic of the areas, in which our participants have experience from voluntary participation.



Cleaning public areas



Painting of old schools



Assisting people in need



Environmental activities, such as planting

Figure 3 Type of Voluntary Activities

Aiming to keep our target group constantly involved in our activities, we invited them to a last online event, on 25<sup>th</sup> of January 2020. During this event, which lasted from 11.00am - 11.30am, we proceeded to the following activity. The facilitators of this online event (AKMI, Helping Hand and Zewepe), based on all the theoretical aspects presented to the participants and after having in mind their prior input, we asked our 35 participants to choose the most appropriate public consultation process, in order to make a common list of the 10 main questions and some possible answers/solutions that an EU mobile citizen would need, in order to volunteer in Greece and Cyprus. The following table entails the proposals received:

Questions	Answers
Which voluntary activities are available at the local level?	All people involved in this activity should reflect and list down the existing activities at the local level
Could you find gaps in the already existing actions?	





What is the concept of the activity?	The creation of groups of EU mobile citizens in the community could help to identify these gaps
What about the accessibility?	Volunteering should be easily accessible to EU mobile citizens. A way should be by providing key information in the language of the EU mobile citizens.
What is the aim of the voluntary action?	A clear understanding of what volunteering is about, and its main objectives should be known to the interested persons.
Should the voluntary action enhance some type of skills?	The voluntary action should lead to skills development and it should enhance the integration in the host society.
How should the voluntary action be designed?	The designing process should take advantage of the skills and knowledge the EU mobile citizen have.
Who should be involved in the development process?	The local community, the citizens, the EU mobile citizens and anyone who would be affected.
What should be the visibility of the voluntary action?	The voluntary action should be visible in the society and high visibility to EU mobile citizens should be achieved, aiming to highlight their involvement and contribution. A good example would be to publish relevant articles at the local media.
What should be the result of the voluntary action?	It depends on the type of the action, the aims to achieve, but in general we concluded that





	<p>the empowerment at the local level should be the main result and the amelioration of living in the local society. Finally, the sustainability of the action was also mentioned,</p>
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Volunteering is a form of social participation in which EU mobile citizens can become active citizens. Aiming to get input from more people, we benefited from the development of the Facebook page of the mobile EU citizens who participate in the Envision activities (<https://www.facebook.com/Humans-on-move-Envision-Community-104540348314779> ). Therefore, on 25<sup>th</sup> of January 2020, we have asked them their input on active participation of EU mobile citizens through Volunteering.

<p><b>Facebook input:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•What advice would you give to a mobile Eu citizen in order to participate in volunteer activities in the host society? What steps should be taken?</li> <li>•What were the main barriers you faced when you first came in the host society?</li> </ul>	
	<p>There are no serious barriers. I do it very frequently, and after participating in the Envision training sessions, I am much more knowledgeable of how to proceed</p>
	<p>We must always help the community as a whole. Such as donating used books to the local library, help in church services, etc.</p>
	<p>In my time in Patras, we could donate old eyeglasses to an organisation that collects and distributes them to the people in need.</p>
	<p>We can always help the elderly by visiting them in nursing homes or teaching them computer skills.</p>
	<p>I had volunteered in Soup Kitchen. This helped me give back to the community.</p>
	<p>I strongly agree. Paperwork is a huge hassle in Greece. I would suggest that everyone must plan it beforehand and avoid inconvenience!!</p>



Inputs on active participation of EU mobile citizens through Volunteering: A mobile EU citizen should establish contacts in Greece with locals.
Inputs on active participation of EU mobile citizen through volunteering: I donated non-perishable food to a local food bank.
In order to participate in greek volunteer activities you should make contacts with the local church, local schools. "Koinoniko pantopoleio" are local stores that provide to the needy. You can donate food supplies or clothing.
Inputs on the active participation of EU mobile citizens through Volunteering: Volunteers should join charities organized by the church and also some organizations like Kivotos. This helped me when I was studying in Athens.
There is also the "koinoniko frontistirio" for helping young kids with their school tasks, free of charge especially for those whose Greek is not their mother's tongue, it is very useful and most importantly free!
What I would suggest is never hesitate to ask. People in Greece were quite friendly and were always helpful. It's great to have support around you.
In the municipality that I live we donate clothing to the local church
My experience in Athens suggests that paperwork is the main barrier in Greece. One must overcome it, even for the simplest procedures.
One can participate in various volunteering activities I have donated blankets, food cans, etc. to various homeless shelters.
Inputs on the active participation of EU mobile citizens through Volunteering: A person can be more involved in local events and connect with people.
I volunteered to help Greek students in need to learn English cooperating with our local church. It was helpful for the community as a whole.
we also donate clothing and kids toy



The participants' input and valuable feedback was taken into consideration. We proposed them to interact in the common space, the facebook page: Humans on move. Envision Community. We proposed them to meet, discuss more about any problem or question they might have that relates to this pilot and in general to their participation in the local societies of the host communities.

Our aim was through an online collaboration to promote their views and act as organisers of voluntary actions and initiatives. We proposed them to act as multipliers at the local level, through organising some activities at the local level. Due to the covid-19 restrictions on the public gatherings, our participants stated to be committed to organise later activities, once the situation will be better and the face-to-face meetings with many people will be allowed. The goal was to achieve an enhanced voluntary online participation, which will be later exploited via face to face collaboration.



## 5. Additional Resources

For the Stakeholders identification, the detailed Excel of our network is provided as a supplementary document. The link is available only to the Project Officer and the Envision Consortium, at: <https://www.project-envision.eu/space/index.php/f/1603>

The PowerPoint Presentation which provides the main theoretical aspects related to this topic is available to any interested person at: <https://www.project-envision.eu/space/index.php/s/X5Q2CRagpdbmnpa>

The PowerPoint Presentation which presents the Public Consultation Methods is available to any interested person at: <https://www.project-envision.eu/space/index.php/s/X5Q2CRagpdbmnpa> .

The invitation for the first pilot in Greece was sent to the participants, via the Moodle Platform that hosted the Envision Learning.

The invitation about the pilot of January 2021, is available at: <https://www.project-envision.eu/space/index.php/s/ELFfXmAS5i5zcmC> .

The participants list is shared only with the Project Officer, along with the printscreens from the Participants consent form (online google forms): <https://www.project-envision.eu/space/index.php/f/1726> .

Moreover, the online forms through which we requested the participants feedback and the printscreens from the input received in the Facebook page are shared with the Project Officer at: <https://www.project-envision.eu/space/index.php/f/1596> .