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YOUNG CIVIC MONITORS FOR THE FUTURE



POLICY REPORT



CIVIC EU

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PROGETTI PER LA SICUREZZA DELLE PERSONE E DELLE COMUNITÀ



Delna

SABIEDRĪBA PAR ATKĻĀTĪBU
TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL
LATVIJAS NODAĻA



4C
cooperate
communicate
create
change

pina

POLICY REPORT

This report presents the results stemming from innovative civic monitoring pilot actions carried out within a 2023 European project involving five countries. The aim of this report is to provide a brief overview of these experiences of youth participation and to identify challenges and lessons learned by the consortium.

Detailed information on the work of each of the five monitoring teams can be found in their final reports, to which this policy report is linked. The focus is on the participation of young people in the social, cultural and political life of their cities. The context is the European Union as a common framework for the partners and as a target for dissemination. The report includes contributions from all project partners, project managers and staff.

Table of contents

Introduction

The Project Framework p 7

Civic Monitoring with Youth, an innovative approach p 9

Civic Monitoring in Practice

Preparation, Set up and Training p 11

The Case of Italy p 13

The Case of Latvia p 15

The Case of Greece p 18

The Case of Romania p 21

The Case of Slovenia p 23

Lessons learned p 26

References p 30





Introduction

The Project Framework

Civic monitoring is one of the key actions of the European project “Young Civic Monitors for the Future”, funded by the European Commission through the Erasmus+ programme.

The two-year initiative is being implemented by a consortium of five organisations from EU countries with expertise in working with and for young people. The organisations are:

- **Romanian Center for European Policies** – Romania, lead
- **Amapola** srl Impresa sociale – Italy
- **Pina** - Association for Culture and Education – Slovenia
- **Transparency International Latvia** – Latvia
- **4C** - Cooperate, Communicate, Create, Change – Greece

Civic-EU aims to highlight the importance of young people’s participation in democratic processes and civil society in Romania, Italy, Slovenia, Greece and Latvia. It provides training opportunities for youth workers and young people, organises capacity-building activities and engages young people in civic actions. By participating in such activities, young people can express their voices and propose ideas and recommendations to decision-makers on issues that are relevant to them. These proposals could then be translated into appropriate public policies that meet the needs of the new generations.

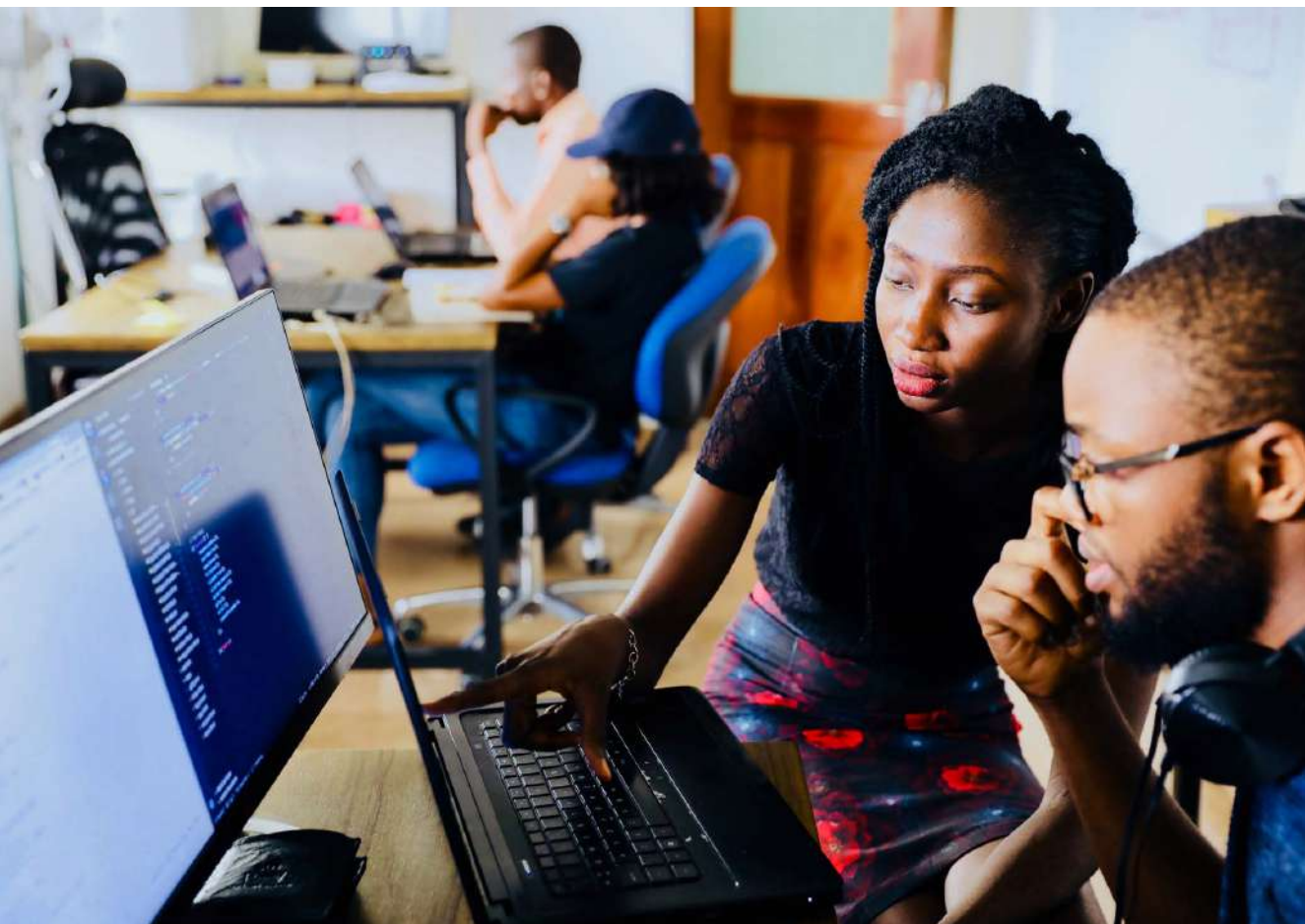
The project objectives are:

- Train and up-skill youth workers and young people through capacity building and mentorship programmes;
- Establish a network of civic monitors to provide young people with the necessary tools to directly influence policy-making and influence decision-makers;
- Monitor public policies and decisions that are relevant for young people taking into account the European Youth Goals
- Engage with decision-makers and provide recommendations on how to improve public policies;
- Disseminate good practices on youth participation through an interactive communication strategy and the organisation of public events.

Main activities include organising training, study visits, exchange programs, and civic monitoring campaigns, as well as building exchanges between young people and their local administration representatives, while ensuring that the marginalised groups, such as women or minorities, have a place at the discussion table.

The project consists of four working phases:

- **Phase 1** focuses on management, monitoring, evaluation and reporting
- **Phase 2** focuses on increasing youth capacity and civic monitoring. Training, research and on-the-field activities will enable young people to learn how public policies work and contribute to improving them.



- **Phase 3** focuses on an empowered dialogue concerning EU policies. Through collective actions and collaborative teamwork, participants harness the ability to empower themselves, acquire essential skills, bolster confidence, and engage in mutual learning through a peer-to-peer approach.
- **Phase 4** focuses on the dissemination, visibility and exploitation of the project results.

The project is directed towards individuals aged 16-30 in addition to local NGOs, civic groups, public authorities, and the general public.

PROJECT IN BRIEF	
Project	Young Civic Monitors for the Future (101090080 – Civic-EU)
Project acronym	Civic-EU
Partners	Romania, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Slovenia
Target groups	Youth Youth NGOs Public authorities General public
Duration	24 months (November 2022 - November 2024)
EU Contribution	394.732 EUR

Civic Monitoring with Youth, an innovative approach

Civic monitoring is a form of participation and active citizenship in which citizens, individually or in groups, carry out research, verification, control and collection of proposals on interventions financed by public funds or on topics of public interest. It is a way of participating in the life of their community that has developed in recent years thanks to several pilot experiments promoted by civil society organisations.

Civic monitoring is an innovative youth engagement mechanism which includes a wide range of different activities and combines various disciplines, skills, tools, ICTs, individual work or a team. It is based on the proximity to an event or policy towards which young may find it easier to get motivated with concerns that are real, material and close to them.

It is a collaborative approach linking civic monitors and local government representatives oriented to the joint development of the community, with specific attention to the issues cared for by the younger generations.

The project methodology includes different methods and means:

- **Research and on-the-field activities** undertaken by the teams of civic monitors, including collection and analysis of public data, use of digital technologies, and onsite visits. Action-research methods enable youth to learn and understand how public policies work, how they impact their lives and how public funds are spent.
- **Collective action and group work** allow the participants, especially those belonging to marginalised groups, to acquire skills, build competencies, gain confidence, learn from each other, and experience new capacities for civic engagement. All these aspects are core components of meaningful public participation which contributes to developing a stronger and lasting sense of citizenship.
- **Regular working groups** between teams of civic monitors and representatives of local governments are the best way to ensure “formal spaces” for mutual interactions and collaboration. Civic monitors are provided with a real mandate to express views, contributions and proposals and decision-makers can listen to them and take them into account in local decision-making processes.

The participatory methods and means (online/offline tools, individual/teamwork, engagement tools/public events/advocacy, inputs/feedback/follow-up) are rigorous but flexible as to leave space for youth creativity and to adapt to different contexts and to the youth of different ages, interests and needs.

Looking at the variety of initiatives implemented to date, three are the key principles that qualify civic monitoring and distinguish it from other civic and/or voluntary activities.

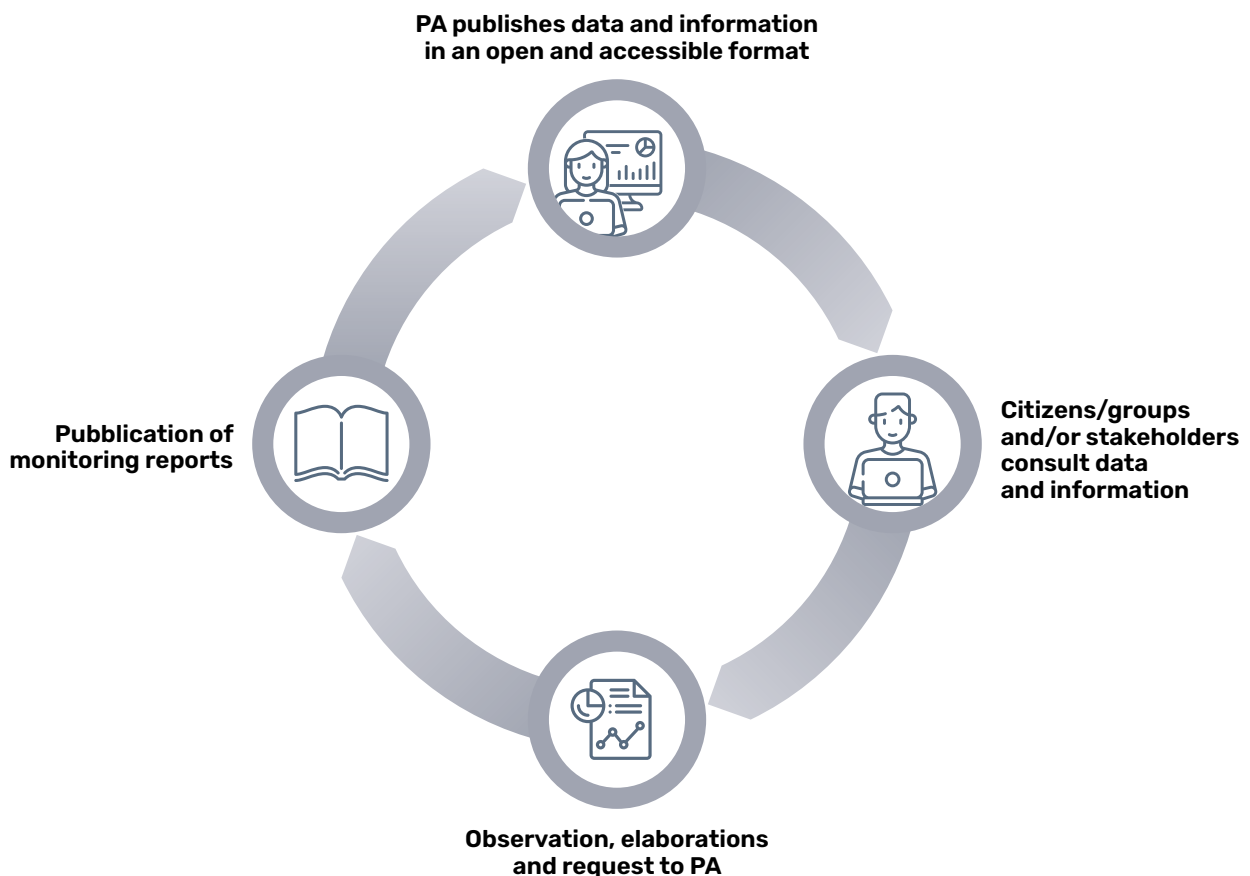
The three key pillars are:

- **Availability of public data/information:** Working on the topic or project to be monitored from published information provided by public administrations is a prerequisite. Monitoring is a research activity and must therefore be based on official and public data; depending on the topic you choose to monitor, the type of data to

be searched for may vary: statistical data, reports on the progress of public work, documentation on public contracts, public expenditure and so on. By using official sources, monitors have more credibility with policymakers. Their suggestions are also more likely to be taken on board and help improve policy.

- **Dialogue with the Public Authority (PA):** Monitoring is a useful tool to interact with and confront the public authorities and to participate in public decisions in a constructive and collaborative way. Dialogue could help young people improve their critical thinking skills, and also to stimulate their curiosity about issues in their daily lives or of importance to them. On the public authorities’ side, dialogue with young people could highlight issues that have not been taken into account but are important in the community.
- **Communication of the results:** The results of monitoring need to be shared and presented to public officials and decision-makers to create a virtuous circle of knowledge and exchange of ideas and suggestions for improvement. The perspective of young people can bring new input and ideas to the project being monitored, promoting positive change and innovation. Dissemination can be through publication on an online platform, through the media or through public presentation events.

Civic monitoring is an engagement initiative because it involves politicians, public administrators and citizens (both young and old generations) working together. To achieve success, they need to communicate effectively and understand each other’s complexities. By turning individual weaknesses into strengths, they can achieve common goals.



Civic Monitoring in practice

Preparation, Set up and Training

Phase 2 of the Civic EU project was dedicated to civic monitoring activities at the local level. It went through a set of activities designed for youth workers, and others for young people.

The first activity consisted of a 3-day **transnational exchange visit** to Ljubljana (Slovenia) designed for the youth workers who coordinated the monitoring activities with young people. The exchange aimed at strengthening their capacity to engage young people in active citizenship initiatives and fostering networking among youth and local institutions and stakeholders at local and European levels.

The exchange was a form of training that was jointly planned and implemented by all partners. All partners contributed to its design and content. Main topics covered included:

- Youth Participation: theory, concepts, link to the EU Youth Strategy
- Good practices on youth participation and engagement carried out by partner organisations
- Civic monitoring: definition, methodology, stages of the process, examples of civic monitoring projects across Europe
- Working with public information & open data
- Online and offline practices and tools to reach young people

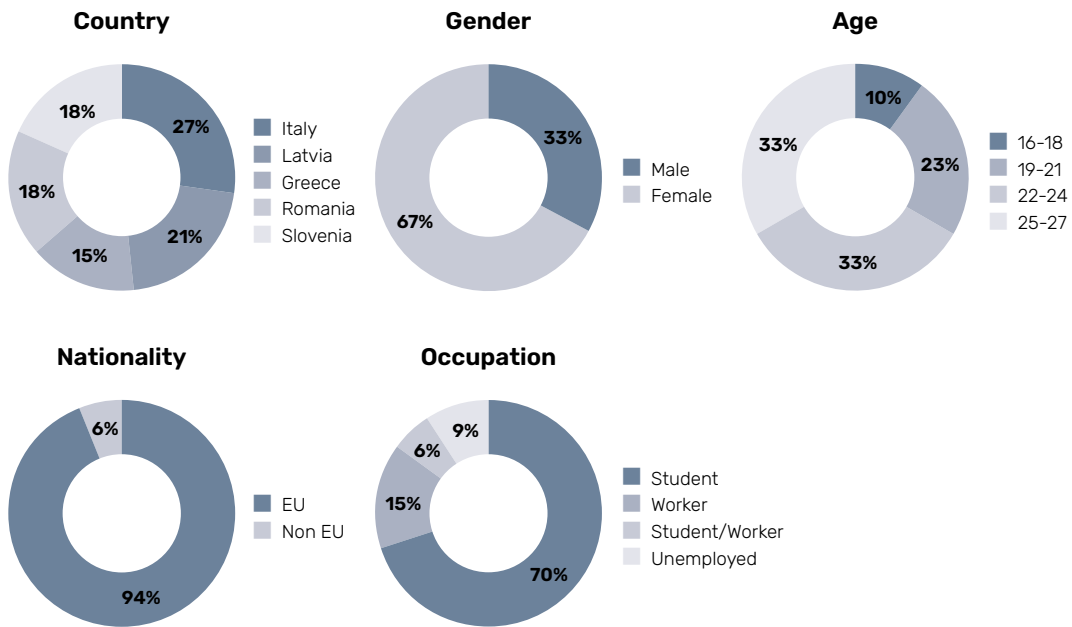
The second activity was **to recruit and set up the group of monitors**. Each partner decided how to select the young participants according to their mission, organisation and experiences in working with young people aged 16-29.

To reach out to marginalised groups, it was agreed that, whenever possible, the focus should have been more on informal contexts with non-formal groups rather than on schools or universities.

The training for the civic monitoring team was the third preparatory activity. As with the previous activities, the programme was developed jointly by the partners using a common structure. This ensured a common strategy for supporting and empowering young people.

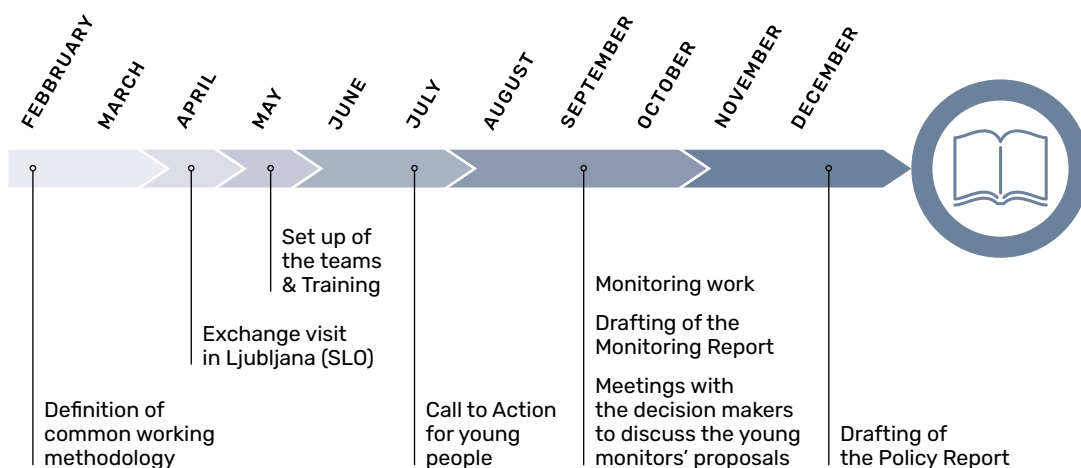
Taking into account the five teams, the total number of young people involved in citizen monitoring activities at the local level is 33.

The following are some graphs on the main characteristics in terms of country of origin, gender, age, nationality and occupation.



In general, most of the youth involved in the national teams of civic monitoring are women, mainly students, mainly students, aged between 22 and 27 years (same for the 22-24 and 25-27 age groups). They are followed, with a lower value, by 19-21 year olds.

Civic monitoring proved to be a suitable and attractive form of citizen engagement for diverse groups of young individuals, particularly resonating with specific categories such as university students in fields like law, political sciences, and social services, as well as with volunteers or part-time workers.



The Case of Italy

The civic monitoring team

In the planning phase, it was decided to carry out the monitoring action in the surrounding area of the City of Turin in order to give young people who do not live in a metropolitan context, and who usually have fewer opportunities, the opportunity to participate in the European project.

The selected area included four medium-sized municipalities in the northern part of Turin where Amapola had been able to benefit from the support of the Orso Cooperative, which runs and manages youth services such as the Youth Centre and the Informagiovani (Information Centre for Young People).



The group was set up ad hoc for the project. The only requirement to participate was to be aged 18 or over.

The promotion for the enrolment was carried out both online - through the social media of Amapola, Orso cooperative and the municipalities - and offline with a brochure and direct contacts with local associations, groups and individual young people living in the interested area.

Youth participation in the civic monitoring was voluntary. The team was made up of nine people aged between 18 and 26, with a fairly even split between the sexes. Their diversity was not limited to age and gender, encompassing a blend of nationalities, backgrounds and experiences: some were civil service volunteers in local services, others were university students, and finally others were migrants temporarily living in neighbouring municipalities. Once enrolled,

they attended a training provided by Amapola and Orso on civic monitoring, held in the period of June-July 2023.

Abstract of the monitoring report

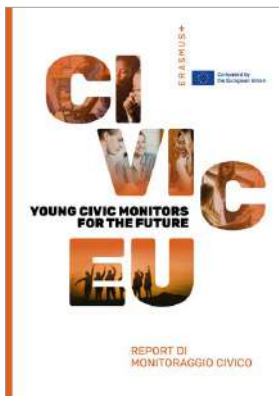
The Italian young monitors decided to chart the local public services available to individuals between the ages of 16 and 29 in order to gain an understanding of their structures and functions and ultimately enhance their quality.

The analysis specifically targets the services and amenities provided by local administration in the areas of employment, education, leisure activities and community integration. These are the topics that have had the greatest impact on young people's lives and therefore were of interest to them.

Four municipalities in the Turin metropolitan area, namely Caselle Torinese, Ciriè, Nole Canavese and San Maurizio, were examined in relation to the above services. Some of them are middle-sized cities (Caselle 13,878 ab, Ciriè 18,112 ab.) others are smaller (Nole 6,743 ab, San Maurizio 10,349 ab.). These cities were chosen as contexts for monitoring because the majority of young participants live or work there, so these places are well-known and meaningful to them.

The activity took place in September and October 2023 by means of group meetings and individual work, under the supervision of Amapola and Orso. The monitors worked in three smaller groups, one for each of the municipalities, with Ciriè and Caselle being considered together.

The group made a number of recommendations to improve the local services they monitored, such as increasing the number of study spaces available and opening hours of public libraries, improving Wi-Fi access, improving communication (especially online) and providing continuity to public events and places that are attractive for young people.



[Read the Italian Monitoring Report](#)

The Case of Latvia

The civic monitoring team

Transparency International Latvia (Delna) organised a three-day training from 29 June to 1 July 2023 to engage and educate seven active young people (aged 16 to 19 years) from Liepāja city, South Kurzeme Municipality and Dobele Municipality about the EU Youth Strategy 2022–2027, civic monitoring process and methodologies, data analysis and youth civic participation possibilities in municipalities of Latvia. Delna also organised the visit to Liepāja city council where young people met with municipal leaders and administrative staff. On 12 July 2023, Delna representative and youth trainer met again in Liepāja city with young people in person and discussed the progress of their monitoring process and continued to engage them in future project activities.

Participants who joined the training found out information about training through local youth organisations and youth centres located in Liepāja city and South Kurzeme



Municipality, on Delna’s social media channels (homepage www.delna.lv, monthly newsletter, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram). The call for participants was also published on the homepage of the local non-governmental organisation “Radi Vidi Pats”, which operates in Liepāja city and with whom Delna developed cooperation thus enlarging local communication activities. All participants applied to training voluntarily and mentioned their

motivation to participate. In the participants selection process, we gave a firsthand to participants with no or little experience in youth civic participation and to participants from rural areas.

During the training, participants formed three groups based on their interests and agreed upon the specific subject to be monitored at the municipal level. Firstly, they gathered information online about the subject to argue their interest and the subject’s broader impact on the local community as well as set the goal of the monitoring report. Second, all groups made a draft action plan for the monitoring process. On the last day of the training, all participants ensured they wanted to continue working on monitoring reports, signed the cooperation agreements with Delna and got the level of skilled young monitors (the trainers).

The youth were drawn to various topics. The first group researched the reasons behind the suspension of the renovations to the Nīca Secondary School's Assembly Hall and its prolonged delay. The second group chose to monitor the planned activities, volunteering program, and the qualifications of the team of the project "Liepāja – European Capital of Culture 2027". The third group examined the mental and psychological health services offered to young people in Liepāja City and how the municipality communicates about these services to those in need of assistance.

During the next two weeks (from 5 to 20 July 2023), each of the three groups developed an action plan and conducted the monitoring while regularly meeting online with Delna representatives and receiving mentoring in the monitoring process. On 12 July 2023, Delna representative and youth trainer met in Liepāja city with all three groups and in person discussed the progress of their monitoring process and gave recommendations on how to improve the monitoring and reach the best results, Trīne also presented the template of the monitoring report, scheduled the meetings with municipal leaders etc. Youth led the monitoring process by themselves: separated tasks and responsibilities, scheduled meetings with representatives of institutions, which are vital to understanding the monitoring subject, gathered information online and in-person and conducted interviews and surveys.

In August 2023, the first and the second groups presented the monitoring reports to both political decision-makers and the administration of Liepāja City and the South Kurzeme district municipality. The third group sent their monitoring report to the Liepāja city council and confirmed that they are open to further discussions and collaboration with the municipality and responsible institutions to improve the availability of youth mental health services in the city.

Abstract of the monitoring report

Seven active young people (aged 16 to 19) from Liepāja city, South Kurzeme Municipality and Dobeles Municipality were engaged in civic monitoring of municipality policies and composed monitoring reports from July 5 to July 20, 2023. The youth were drawn to topics such as:

- The reasons behind the suspension of the renovations to the Nīca Secondary School's Assembly Hall and its prolonged delay. The objective of the civic monitoring was to investigate the reasons for the interruption and prolonged delay of the renovation work in the Nīca Secondary School's Great Hall. The topic of the report was relevant because the interruption and non-resumption of the construction process continued to impact the school's life, including the lives of the report's authors, who are students at Nīca Secondary School.
- Monitoring the implementation of the Liepāja – European Capital of Culture 2027 project. The main goal of the monitoring report was to monitor the planned activities, volunteering program, and the qualifications of the team of the project "Liepāja – European Capital of Culture 2027". The authors of the monitoring report are two students of Liepāja State Technical School. The topic is relevant because it is significant for Liepāja's cultural development and provides opportunities for public

involvement to study and monitor the ongoing process while being informed about the activities and participating in them. The choice of the topic was also determined by the youth's personal interests.

- The mental and psychological health services offered to young people in Liepāja city and how the municipality communicates about these services to those in need of assistance. The authors of the monitoring report are three youngsters from high schools. The main goal of civic monitoring is to assess the availability of mental health services for young people in Liepāja city. Given the broad nature of the topic and the relatively short monitoring period from July 5 to July 20, 2023, the authors of the monitoring report narrowed down the focus to the situation in Liepāja's schools, students' experiences with school psychologists, their availability and competence (education and work experience). The monitoring was conducted in all Liepāja schools, where, according to data from 2021, a total of 8301 students were enrolled. Attention was also paid to existing issues not only related to the availability of services but also to young people's experiences when interacting with psychologists.

The youth embarked on civic oversight on July 5, 2023, after attending a training organised by Delna titled "How to do Civic Monitoring in Municipality". Initially, the youths gathered and analysed information available on the internet resources, then created an action plan for civic monitoring activities. To gain additional insights on the topic of their interest, they distributed survey questionnaires and interviewed experts and individuals working directly with the topic.

The youth acknowledged that during the civic monitoring, they encountered difficulties in acquiring information on the municipality's website and other related public resources regarding their areas of interest. Often, while researching these resources, the youths were unable to find the necessary information. The most valuable sources of information acquisition, as per the youths, were interviews with experts.



[Read the Latvian Monitoring Report](#)

The Case of Greece

The civic monitoring team

The group was created exclusively for the project. The promotion of the participants' enrollment was carried out both online - through social media channels, by sending a newsletter to all subscribed users of the official website and by personal invitations to young people, who were looking for motivation to make use of their knowledge or studies and at the same time to contribute to the local community - and offline with information leaflet, shared internally but also with direct contact to the people, who participated in other actions and trainings organised by 4C.

The participants in the civic monitoring were therefore included in this training on their own initiative. The volunteers filled out the corresponding participation form and from the



total number of 25 applicants, 17 volunteers participated in the local training, of which 5 recorded the monitoring and the presentation of the results. During the training, experiential activities were carried out to strengthen the participation group, the differences between monitoring and public policy were distinguished and cases of examples of civic monitoring in the city of Athens were discussed. The use of the Padlet contributed to keeping the participants in touch during the summer in order to record their observations and keep everything shared. Communication was organised

between each other and, over the summer, civic monitoring activities took place around Athens. The trainers kept in contact with groups to ensure they were working on their reports and offered any help that participants may need.

Following the activities, participants discussed real-life examples in Athens where monitoring could be implemented. Participants came up with four tangible examples and were divided into groups based on which example they preferred to work on. The final result was three monitoring reports by five young people.

The last day of the training was dedicated to reflecting on the success of the action as well as on the essential knowledge the participants gained, while also thinking about any suggestions for changes they would like to mention in their evaluation.

Abstract of the monitoring report

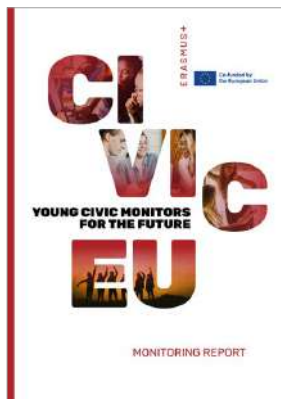
The Greek organisation 4C Cooperate Communicate Create Change implemented the civic monitoring of different areas of civic life, which composed three monitoring reports from July to September 2023. The civic monitoring initiatives encompassed a range of pressing concerns in Athens addressing the city's commitment to urban development, sustainability, public participation in decision-making, and social well-being. They included efforts like the "Great Promenade of Athens" project, discussions about the necessity and safety of a University Police force, and the 28th October square's renovation project and proposed development.

The selected policies in Athens reflected diverse concerns and priorities which the young civic monitors chose to investigate and actively engaged in:

- The reasons behind the project "Great Promenade of Athens" (GPA) were to investigate the construction delay and how they could be more included in the decision-making process. The project represents an urban development initiative aimed at transforming the city of Athens into a more pedestrian-friendly, sustainable, culturally vibrant city with new opportunities for the citizens. The "Great Promenade of Athens" project was approved as part of emergency measures in May 2020, with construction completed within a month. However, concerns and protests led to changes in the project and in August 2021, it was announced that the project would become permanent with some modifications to address transportation needs. Despite some legal challenges, renovation works have been progressing, aiming for completion within approximately 16 to 20 months, aligning with public interest and planning council approvals.



- The case of the University Police, the purpose of the proposal and the safety of the students and four months of police education, asking if it is essential. The University police would be active at four universities in the most significant cities: three universities in Athens (Athens University of Economics and Business, National Technical University of Athens, and National and Kapodistrian University of Athens) and one in Thessaloniki (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki). The idea is integration with the body of the Special Guards that would be around the cited Universities and would intervene whenever necessary. Regarding the educational plan, it would gather around 400 people, primarily men, to teach them about criminal procedure, constitutional law, criminology, social, moral & physical education, self-defence, handling of weapons and analysis of real and virtual scenarios. The goal is the development of intellectual, mental and physical ability.
- The report outlined the historical context of the 28th October square and the municipality's plan to construct a school complex in the area. It highlighted the square's significance as a green and biodiverse space, emphasising its role as a recreational haven for the community. The report further detailed civic monitoring activities undertaken by concerned citizens, including online petitions, participation in municipal meetings, peaceful protests, legal actions, and community engagement efforts. These actions collectively aimed to preserve the square and raise awareness of its importance, as the proposed construction threatens to alter its character and ecological value.



[Read the Greek Monitoring Report](#)

The Case of Romania

The civic monitoring team

The young monitors took part in the civic monitoring activity after participating in the training in Bucharest coordinated by the CRPE team on how to monitor the implementation of public policies at the local level. The monitors were careful to pick policies that are also relevant towards the broader European policy space, namely the green and urban development policy areas.

The group of civic monitors was selected as a result of an internal call for participation in the network of young people with whom CRPE collaborated. In parallel, we disseminated the initiative among the network of youth workers who founded an initiative that is popular among young audiences ('Politică la Minut'). Youth participation in the civic monitoring approach was therefore voluntary. They are all students between the ages of 20 and 23, with backgrounds in law, political science or public policy.

The organisation of civic monitoring activities involved the collaboration between youth workers, selected youth and the coordinator from the CRPE. The means of communication were both on-site and online and they worked either individually or in teams. The monitors chose topics that were relevant towards their respective communities as well as age groups. They reflected the concerns of citizens living in Bucharest and surrounding communities, concerns which affected a large age group, not only young people.



Abstract of the monitoring report

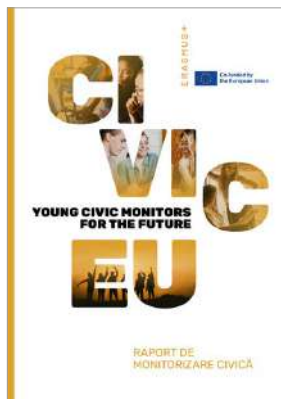
The monitoring activity was focused on the city of Bucharest. The city is divided into six 'sectors' or districts. The administrative responsibilities are divided between the General City Hall of Bucharest and the District City Halls. Key public services such as public transport and the maintenance of main boulevards, public lightning, the district heating or the maintenance of major public parks are the responsibilities of the General City Hall, while the districts are responsible for waste management, maintenance of smaller boulevards and green spaces, housing, district police, etc.

Bucharest is one of the European capitals with the lowest qualitative indices regarding the state of the environment. The city has low accessibility and quality. Mobility is car-based, public transport is under-utilised, the adjacent infrastructure is poor, and the

use of bicycles or the expansion of the pedestrian areas is rarely on the public agenda. Bucharest is the third most congested EU city. Air quality sensors often go red, and the city still does not have an integrated air quality plan.

Civic monitors analysed several key policy areas for the city: waste management, building zone codes and green areas. They either focused on specific sectors of Bucharest or looked at city-wide policies and legislation, as in the case of building codes. They also provided recommendations to the city authorities and specific steps for these recommendations to be fulfilled. Specifically:

- the first report aimed at monitoring the green-blue infrastructure in Bucharest (2nd district) focusing on policy proposals aimed at improving the quality of life of its inhabitants.
- the second report analysed the public policies on waste management in Bucharest (3rd district) which resulted from a lack of transparency, coupled with poor data quality and insufficient details on waste traceability.
- the third report focused on the challenges which are part of Bucharest's construction regulations and highlighted concerns about corruption in the permitting process, leading to potential compromises in project safety and quality.



[Read the Romanian Monitoring Report](#)

The Case of Slovenia

The civic monitoring team

The Association for Culture and Education PiNA who coordinated the project activities in Slovenia, conducted the monitoring process in collaboration with the organisation TiPovej and the Department for Culture - Youth Office of the Municipality of Ljubljana.

The invitation to participate in the project was sent out through various online channels of youth organisations and networks that support the integration of young people into the community. In the first informative meeting on June 22, 12 young people responded to the invitation, later 6 of them actively entered the project by attending the national

training and starting with the monitoring process. The national training and monitoring process was conducted both online and on-site.

The group of monitors consisted of young people who were interested in the Youth Strategy of the Municipality of Ljubljana and the related quality of life of young people in the city. The young monitors chose the areas they were interested in and dedicated themselves to research and monitoring the implementation of policies. The group consisted mostly of students and 1 employed person. They were motivated by curiosity about what was happening in each area and the desire to be able to influence improvements with their suggestions. Attributes that describe the group: motivation, curiosity, persistence, organisation, curiosity.

In the entire process of monitoring the implementation of policies, the young participants anchored their efforts on a guiding question: what is already good in each segment of youth policies and what can be even better?



Abstract of the monitoring report

A group of young people monitored the implementation of the measures developed within the Strategy for Youth of Municipality of Ljubljana 2016 - 2025.

The young monitors faced a rather weak response from the stakeholders. Therefore, the results presented a less elaborate picture of the current situation in the implementation of the policies than envisaged.

The research was done through desktop work, interviews and online questionnaires and was conducted between 21st September and 20th October 2023.

The research results showed that young people wish for more facilities that would support their active participation in society, more short-term part-time employment opportunities that would enable them more independence, clear information on the happenings in the town and the opportunities they have and better public transport connections between all the parts of the municipality including the rural areas. The rural areas of the municipality are seen as zones with fewer opportunities for youth and their active participation in the community. The program networks of NGOs that are supported by the municipality are seen as good tools for the implementation of the measures improving the quality of life of youth in the town. More emphasis should be given to the provision of information for youth. In regard to business and innovation, young people wished for more support from the town since a lot of youth see themselves as taking a career in their own companies.

Young people recommended that the municipality nurture the diversity in the town regarding the offer of cultural content, goods, and services available, support the development and maintenance of a good and reliable public transportation system covering all municipalities, improve information for young people including the development of a platform presenting all the opportunities available for youth in the town. They also recommended the standardisation of the definition of youth used by different municipality departments since the current situation doesn't allow the researchers to measure the impact of the implemented measures on the population. The municipality should continue the involvement of the representatives of the program networks in the processes of creating strategic and policy documents since they can provide insights into the everyday needs of the community. The municipality should also create measures to support the development of start-up businesses and mentoring schemes for young entrepreneurs.



[Read the Slovenian Monitoring Report](#)



Lessons learned

The final section of this report focuses on the main findings in terms of positive elements and difficulties encountered during the civic monitoring activities carried out in the five partner countries, with the aim of identifying and sharing the lessons learnt from the experiences made. The report also focuses on providing useful suggestions for future similar initiatives at local or European levels.

The tables below present the positive factors (strengths), difficulties (weaknesses) and suggestions for improvement that emerged during the activities.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
The meetings with local politicians or elected officials and the possibilities to present them monitoring reports and recommendations were very much appreciated by the young monitors	Training time too long in relation to monitoring activity
Informal and open discussions between local administrations officials and young people; direct communication and relationships maintained throughout the monitoring	The public policies that some teams chose to monitor were too large for the time available
Quality training	Lack of transparency and publicly available data made the desk research difficult. Municipal websites are poor and information is usually not updated or presented in an easy-to-find way
Opportunities for young people to meet and work with other peers who want to be active	Online status check meetings were less effective
Motivating experience. Young people were better aware of their rights and duties, as well as of the mechanisms of civic participation	Some municipalities or local organisations delayed or failed to respond to the monitors' requests
Innovative methodologies	Carrying out monitoring during the summer period was more difficult (lower participation and difficult coordination work by youth workers)
Common training and shared methodology among partners	Younger participants lacked the skills to develop the report autonomously, requiring more support from youth workers than expected
Positive and functional collaboration with other organisations	Specific contextual circumstances (e.g. the change in the local government that prevented the local authorities from getting involved; personal relationships that were an obstacle to conducting more qualitative research)
Feasible and straightforward recommendations and proposals from monitors. High potential and ease of adoption by public authorities	

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS
TRAINING
Focus the training on the issues that the monitors will be working on, rather than on the general aspects of civic monitoring (theory, concepts, etc)
Combine the training with a mentoring activity to support the monitoring groups
Actively involve local youth organisations and leaders in the training process to create a more relatable and engaging learning environment for young participants
More time for knowledge-building activities during the training; it may be useful to share more about the monitoring activities each group did with other participants
IMPLEMENTATION PHASE
Focus the monitoring action on a specific issue, public work or service (avoid broad issues)
Insist on teams of at least 2-3 people for monitored issues/policies (not individual monitoring)
Avoid scheduling the monitoring activity during the summer period. One option could be September to take advantage of the motivation of the new year
Allow more time for the monitoring activity (at least two months) in order to offer more opportunities for the young monitors to meet with experts, local organisations and representatives of different political parties (if applicable etc)
Schedule more in-person meetings with the monitors halfway through the monitoring period to discuss results and issues
The issues monitored could be worked in more depth with the support of a coach so that the young people could delve into the topics and understand them more
Organise a preparatory workshop with an expert on the topic that a group of young monitors will monitor
Have more meetings with public officials to build "bridges"
Emphasise the importance of up-to-date and easily accessible information, possibly collaborating with municipalities to improve data presentation in the monitoring report



During our experience, we have identified some key lessons about youth participation and civic engagement, namely:

- **Relationships with local decision-makers are important.** Keeping elected officials involved sets the stage for lasting commitment and a direct relationship with young people. Monitoring activity differs from other forms of civic engagement in that it is strongly linked to public policy. The civic monitoring process is about public policy: by monitoring a public policy or a public intervention, young people can explore and better understand how a public policy works (or doesn't work) and contribute to improving it. The presence of elected officials and local representatives is crucial at every step of the process, from training to monitoring and follow-up, and needs to be carefully planned and managed throughout the process. Direct knowledge and cooperation promote familiarity between young citizens and adults, facilitate ongoing communication, ensure a full understanding of how public policies are implemented and facilitate the inclusion of young people's proposals.
- **Civic monitoring is a practice of engagement that inspires and empowers young citizens.** Participants found it to be a completely new, challenging but stimulating experience. It combines training, research and fieldwork to meet the different interests and skills of the monitors. It brings young people closer to the political and social life of their city, increasing their interest and motivation through peer interaction. It provides them with the tools and spaces to become active in the local community, even to the point of becoming personally involved in politics (e.g. one of the Geek civic monitors was inspired to stand in the Athens municipal elections).

The non-formal methodology of citizen monitoring works on all three dimensions of empowerment: It starts with the individual (a single young person) to create an impact that is extended to the group, to reach out further and further (the community). The process of developing individual skills, competencies and resources (self-confidence, sense of identity, awareness of rights and duties) together with the strengthening of interpersonal competencies within a collective group dimension (communicative-relational skills, teamwork, autonomy, leadership, collaborative/conflict approach) and developing of relationships with adults (youth workers and political representatives) allows young people's contributions to change in the local community to be more visible, effective and impactful.

- **Civic monitoring contributes to the capacity building of youth workers and youth organisations.** Civic monitoring can be carried out by young people individually or in groups. The Civic-EU project experienced the collective mode where groups of young people were trained, supported and coordinated by youth workers. Improving the skills and knowledge of youth workers is therefore crucial in such a process. Specific training on the practice of citizen monitoring was provided in the early stages of the project to enable youth workers to become familiar with the concepts and to share a common framework of work. Youth workers and trainers in the five EU countries learned new methodologies to support civic engagement, youth participation and active citizenship in a comprehensive framework, which they plan to use in the future, and therefore have a lasting impact on a larger number of young people. At an organisational level, civic monitoring has enabled some of the project organisations to develop new relationships with local organisations. These new partnerships bring new skills, networks and opportunities to reach new targets and/or marginalised young people.
- **Need to ensure continuity of civic monitoring, from piloting to permanent participatory activity.** Civic monitoring is a joint activity between policymakers, young citizens and practitioners, who must learn to debate, understand and address their respective complexities, turning their respective weaknesses into strengths by working together. If it were a continuous participatory activity of all partner organisations (e.g. annual planning), it would contribute to promoting cultural work in which young citizens are seen as allies, helping to achieve better public policies and reducing the distance between young people and institutions.

References

Project Team's Website

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4C - cooperate- communicate- create - change

<https://project4corg.wixsite.com/4cngo>





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