

EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

(To be filled in and uploaded as deliverable in the Portal Grant Management System, at the due date foreseen in the system.)

 Please provide one sheet per event (one event = one workpackage = one lump sum.)

PROJECT	
Participant:	"ZIVOT I RADOST", UDRUGA ZA DJECU S TESKOCAMA I OSOBE S INVALIDITETOM (ZIR),
PIC number:	887379766
Project name and acronym:	GETting persons with disabilities INcluded in civil society and democratic life (GET-IN)

EVENT DESCRIPTION	
Event number:	1
Event name:	THE KICK-OFF EVENT/EVENT 1 IN CESTICA, VINICA AND LUDBREG, CROATIA
Type:	Mutual Learning activities The event was organized as a 3-day event with various activities:
In situ/online:	<i>In-situ</i>
Location:	Day 1 – March 24 th 2026 - Cestica, HR Day 2 – March 25 th 2026 – Vinica, HR Day 3 – March 26 th 2026 – Ludbreg, HR
Date(s):	March 24 th to March 26 th 2026
Website(s) (if any):	https://zivotiradost.hr/cerv-projekt-get-in/ ; https://zivotiradost.hr/1-manifestacija-projekta-get-in-cestica-vinica-ludbreg/
Participants	
Female:	78
Male:	32
Non-binary:	0
From country 1 [Croatia]:	74
From country 2 [Slovenia]:	13
From country 3 [Italy]:	12
From country 4 [Ireland]:	3
From country 5 (Serbia)	8
Total number of participants:	110
	From total number of countries: 5
Description	
<i>Provide a short description of the event and its activities.</i>	
<p>The event took place in over three days (from Tuesday, March 24th – Thursday March 26th 2026) in Croatia. Day 1 (March 24th 2026) was held in Cestica, Croatia. Day 2 was held in Vinica, Croatia on March 25th 2026. Day 3 was held in Ludbreg, Croatia on March 26th 2026. All activities of the event were held in-situ. The activities were organized in a manner ensuring that the following objectives were achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To build awareness and understanding of the challenges faced by persons with disabilities (intellectual & physical) in accessing education and how EU policies and strategies impact the daily life of such citizens (to be facilitated via exchanges and sharing perspectives) ▪ To engage citizens and gather inputs on how communities should address the needs of persons with disabilities <p>Day 1 (Tuesday March 24th) consisted of the organization of the opening conference for the project (T1.1.). The project concept and the activities of ŽIR and the municipality of Cestica were presented in order to show how the town addresses the needs of persons with disabilities and includes citizens in the democratic life of the community. The Mayor of the Municipality of Cestica started the conference by describing how persons with disabilities are vital part of the community. He emphasized that the primary school is adjusting its activities so as to ensure that teaching assistance in line with the needs of various persons with disabilities is secured (via teaching assistants with specific training), how the Municipality is installing new infrastructure and equipment to ensure persons with disabilities can access public services and how various CSOs (like ŽIR) are organizing social activities, sporting events, training for parents, etc, which ensures that the persons with disabilities have an active role in the democratic life of the community. After that, Patrick Galeski (working with ŽIR) presented the project concept to the participants. During the</p>	

presentation, partner representatives (Giulia Scuz from Si Puo Fare in Torino, IT; Giovanni Mazzolli from the Municipality of Cavriago, IT; Carol Durkin from Leitrim Development Integrated Development Company, Leitrim County, IRE; Bojana Lanc from Regional Development Agency Srem, RS; and Marko Zevnik from Zavod Sopotniki in Slovenia) described how they contribute to inclusion and diversity in their communities via their specific initiatives (e.g. employment programmes and training in Leitrim, free transportation services for elderly populations by Sopotniki, independent living apartments organized by Si Puo Fare, etc.). To finalize the presentation, participants took part in a Slido survey (which engaged 49 participants). This survey was designed to stimulate discussion and the sharing of perspectives about the rights of persons with disabilities. Some of the interesting findings included the answers to these questions:

- The statement „Persons with disabilities can access public services (healthcare, social care, education, etc.) in line with their needs (e.g. there are sufficient ramps & infrastructure available to help them access buildings, available assistance or tech, etc.).“
 - o 67% of the respondents disagreed with this statement, indicating that most citizens believe that more action needs to be done to ensure that persons with disabilities gain access to their rights
- The statement “Citizens in my community are aware of the challenges and issues faced persons with disabilities“
 - o 59% of the respondents disagreed with the statement, showing that more needs to be done to build understanding and compassion towards the needs and capacities of persons with disabilities
- Other findings:
 - o All of the respondents indicated that EU integration and incorporation of EU values in civil society have led to improved access to rights for persons with disabilities.
 - o Concerning education, the majority of respondents stated that teaching assistants and teachers at schools require more specific training suited to the needs of persons with disabilities;

To end the conference, Irena Milec, ŽIR's president, presented on ŽIR's activities (organizing workshops, sporting events, specific assistance for child with disabilities, working directly with parents to develop sensitivity towards their needs, etc.). She emphasized that close cooperation between stakeholders is crucial in ensuring persons with disabilities gain access to their rights.

Day 2 (Wednesday March 25th) consisted of firstly a site visit to the middle school “Arboretum Opeka” (T1.3.), which works closely with ŽIR. The school specializes in teaching agriculture/agronomy, forestry, and other environmental sciences and it has taken particular measures (in terms of curriculum development, infrastructure and relationships with parents) to ensure that persons with disabilities gain equal access to education (with emphasis on how their approaches to inclusive education contribute to environmental protection). Teachers and specialists (counsellors, pedagogues, etc.) at the school described how the education system is evolving towards “modular curricula”, which provides a more flexible approach to education such that courses and lessons can be adapted to spectre of needs of learners. At the school, particular emphasis is also put on “hands-on” learning where instead of learning exclusively theory, the emphasis is put on having students apply knowledge to normal scenarios/activities in agriculture, forestry and tourism. It was emphasized by school representatives that as the Croatian education system becomes more integrated with EU policy goals, the school has focused on enhancing access to education for persons with disabilities via an increased number of teaching assistants, increased specialized training for teachers on how approach the needs of persons with disabilities and a focus on ensuring that persons with disabilities are fully integrated in regular classes. Arboretum Opeka works closely with ŽIR as their pupils with intellectual disabilities (autism) require support from ŽIR's experts and personal assistants.

The second part of the site visit included a visit to the renovated historical castle “Arboretum Opeka”. Emphasis was put on how the newly renovated/adapted spaces of the castle (which were EU co-funded to make the castle home of the regional competency centre in agriculture) have enhanced the school's capacities to engage persons with disabilities, ensuring that social inclusion and equal opportunities on the job market are ensured. Through discussions, Q&A sessions and by directly accessing specific infrastructure, participants will gain new information and knowledge that will contribute to enhancing their approaches to enhancing the participation of persons with disabilities in the democratic life of the community.

In the afternoon session, there was a workshop (T1.2.) organized by ŽIR connected to enhancing understanding of how EU policies concerning persons with disabilities (i.e. Strategy for the rights of persons with disabilities 2021-2030). Breakout groups were formed in which mixed groups of participants from various backgrounds examined typical situations affecting persons with disabilities. This format allowed participants to exchange knowledge and perspectives and determine potential solutions based on EU values. Findings from this part will be used to develop new project ideas and synergies between participants. The topics in the breakout groups included: 1) How to ensure renovated cultural heritage sites reflect the needs of persons with physical disabilities; 2) The dangers of excluding persons with disabilities by going too digital with education; 3) Bridging gender gaps in schools; 4) Barriers to employment; 5) Addressing staff shortages in schools.

To end the day, a short project meeting (T1.4.) between partner representatives was organized; allowing the partners to discuss future activities/events, discuss the findings from the first and second day of activities, and review the internal evaluation framework developed for the partnership.

On Day 3 (Thursday March 26th), the main activity was a site visit to Ludbreg SUNCE. Representatives of SUNCE described the approach they use to engage citizens on issues impacting persons with disabilities (specifically activities that build understanding, awareness of citizens and that promote independent living in dignity for persons with disabilities). After that, a site visit to the cooperative apartments of Ludbreg SUNCE were organized so as to show other participants how citizens are supporting persons with disabilities to live independently, and thus participate in the democratic life of communities. Via interactions, demonstrating the approach used by SUNCE to enhance the capacities of persons with disabilities to participate in the community, and interacting with residents at the apartments, participants gained further understanding of how they can apply the principles of inclusion and diversity to their communities.

Via this approach to organizing and implementing the event, participants learned:

- how the engagement of citizens, civil society organizations and local authorities (municipal government, schools, etc.) create equal opportunities in education in rural areas for persons with disabilities;
- became aware of the best methods and practices in terms of ensuring that persons with disabilities gain access to education and their rights
- improved awareness among citizens about how EU policies/values (solidarity, inclusion, diversity) positively impact the quality of education

The participants were also able to interact and generate new project ideas (connected to education actions focusing on the needs of persons with disabilities).

Feedback from participants

Participants at the event were made aware of the EU survey on Justice, Rights and Values and in total 29 participants have completed the survey. The findings show that the event has had a positive impact on citizens and their attitudes towards the needs of persons with disabilities in the community.

Some of the findings regarding the key questions include:

- Objectives of the event: What is your overall assessment of the event? Average score out of 5): 4.76
- What benefits has this event brought to you? (Increased awareness). Average score out of 5: 4.72
- What benefits has this event brought to you? (Increased skills): Average score out of 5: 4.31
- What benefits has this event brought to you? (Increased cooperation): Average score out of 5: 4.83
- My perception of this topic has changed (Yes, definitely: 14; Yes, to some extent: 14; No, not really: 1)
- I am likely to react differently now when confronted to the topic (Yes, definitely: 15; Yes, to some extent: 13; not really: 1)

Despite the strong scores, there are some areas that could be improved on (i.e. increasing skills on the topics relating to the social inclusion of persons with disabilities). These findings will be taken into account during the planning of the next events.

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