



Vienna, March 23rd 2018

Event Report:

Dialogue on EU Cohesion Policy, March 16th 2018, Murinsel, Graz.

Description of the discussion during the event:

On Friday, March 16th 2018, the third Austrian citizen's dialogue on EU Cohesion Policy took place at the Murinsel in Graz. First, best-practice projects of the region were presented to the audience (Regionalmanagement Steirischer Zentralraum, Qualifikationsagentur Oststeiermark with their project "Flagship Products" and BICYCLE). Comments made by the project beneficiaries included bureaucratic burdens throughout the funding period, as well as a lack of publicity of the projects. As a method of improvement, one beneficiary suggested granting an extra budget for communication to the lead partners.

In the following debate with our three distinguished speakers (MEP Othmar Karas, Member of Nationalrat Jörg Leichtfried and Miguel Avila Albez, representing DG Regio) we further discussed the fragile balance between bureaucratic requirements and fraud prevention. One beneficiary argued that lump-sum payments should be considered, especially for the small projects, because they lack operative capacity to fulfil all reporting requirements. Another aspect of the debate focused on the public benefit of Cohesion Policy in Styria.

Participants of the dialogue favour investment in infrastructure, education and research projects. Additionally, they wish for more support for SMEs, less for large companies and the agriculture sector. Participants highly criticised the lack of communication and information about EU-funded projects.

Main conclusions:

Citizens did not know about EU-funded projects in their region. But the interest in the projects was high. The format of the event was successful. The participants were actively seeking for individual conversations with the beneficiaries. They asked them detailed questions and told their critical opinions.

Number of participants: 58

Type of participants: students, pupils, citizens, project beneficiaries, politicians

List of participants:

see annex

Media Coverage:

Social Media activity:



- short Instagram and Facebook stories during the event, streamed on "Bürgerforum Europa" channels, using #EUinmyRegion
- Facebook event promotion, using #EUinmyRegion
- Periscope live-stream of the World-Café
- several tweets during discussion, using #EUinmyRegion
- promotion of event video via YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter
- promotion of event photos via Facebook, Instagram, and our website

Press release via APA OTS-Service

https://www.ots.at/presseaussendung/OTS_20180306_OTS0064/freitag-1632018-17-uhr-europa-in-der-steiermark-buergerdialog-mit-leichtfried-und-karas