

Vienna, Feb. 8th 2018

Event Reporting: Event Nr 1

Dialogue on Cohesion Policy, Feb 2nd 2018, House of the EU, Vienna

Description of the discussion during the event:

On Friday, February 2nd 2018, the first dialogue on Cohesion Policy took place at the House of the EU in Austria. About 50 interested people attended, including students, stakeholders and citizens. The main aim of the event was to inform citizens about EU cohesion policy in Vienna and to stimulate a debate about its relevance.

Starting at 2pm, we had a World-Café with 6 different stations, including best-practice projects as well as public organisations working in cohesion policy, namely EuroVienna (www.eurovienna.at), Europaschirm (news.wko.at/news/oesterreich/aktioneuropaschirm.html), ESF Austria (<http://www.esf.at/esf-in-oesterreich/>), the Initiative for Adult Education (www.initiative-erwachsenenbildung.at), Academy for Further Education (wba.or.at) and ProVita Education GmbH (www.provitabildung.at). One main focus during the World-Café was informing participants about the various possibilities to receive co-funding. Another main aspect of the debate during the World-Café was how the money in the funds is used, what kind of projects are funded and what the different projects have accomplished.

After a short coffee break, in the second part of the event, we had three keynote speakers. First, Julia Bachtrögler, research assistant at the Vienna University of Economics and Business, presented her latest research about the distribution and effects of EU regional funding. She talked about the receivers of funds and analysed the economic benefits for the European regions. As second speaker, Vera Tarnai from DG Regio presented a quick overview of cohesion policy after 2020 and the current state of negotiations. She emphasised the importance of the current consultation process. Furthermore, Tarnai alluded to the high bureaucratic barriers and ways of dealing with it. Finally, Eva Pretscher, former Head of the Liaison Office of the City of Vienna to the EU, stressed out that cohesion policy is important because there is no national pendant to it. Also, being the only urban area in Austria, the City of Vienna is not well represented when it comes to Cohesion Policy, Pretscher argued. Participants could subsequently ask questions or directly address the keynote speakers. Their input ranged from questions about the following founding period to complaints about bureaucratic burdens. The event closed with an informal 'Get-Together' with snacks and beverages.

Judging from the feedback cards that we collected, the interactive form of the World-Café was a highlight of the event. Knowledge of the funds and various projects was very low, even though the participants seemed very interested.



Main conclusions:

Citizens did not know about EU-funded projects in their region. Beneficiaries did not know about the other EU-funded projects that were on display at the World-Café. In general, information or public reference of EU-funded projects is missing. Beneficiaries should function as multipliers. Concerning the future of EU Cohesion Policy, one main demand was to focus on urban areas as well, not only rural areas.

Number of participants: 52

Type of participants: civil society, citizens, project beneficiaries

List of participants:

see annex

Media Coverage:

Social Media activity:

- short Instagram und Facebook storys 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 und Twitter
- promotion of event photos via Facebook, Instagram, and our website

Press release via APA OTS-Service (https://www.ots.at/pres-seaussendung/OTS_20180201_OT0124/morgen-222018-1400-uhr-was-hat-europa-fuer-wien-getan-euinmyregion)