



Interim Evaluation of the Europe for Citizens Programme 2007-13

Final Report



Contents

1.0	Introduction.....	4
1.1	Purpose and scope of this report	4
1.2	Structure of this report.....	4
2.0	Description of the Programme.....	5
2.1	Development of the programme	5
2.2	Programme aims and objectives	7
2.3	Structure and budget.....	8
2.4	Activity between 2007 and 2009.....	9
2.4.1	Action 1 – Active Citizens for Europe	9
2.4.2	Action 2 – Active Civil Society for Europe	11
2.4.3	Action 3 – Together for Europe	12
2.4.4	Action 4 – Active European Remembrance.....	13
2.4.5	Types of activities supported.....	14
3.0	Evaluation Context and Methodology	15
3.1	Situating the evaluation.....	15
3.2	Evaluation methodology	15
3.3	Intervention logic.....	16
3.3.1	Global aim	17
3.3.2	General and intermediate objectives.....	18
3.3.3	Specific and operational objectives	19
3.4	Intended effects	20
3.5	Research tasks	22
3.6	Strengths and weaknesses of the approach.....	23
4.0	Relevance	25
4.1	Relevance of programme objectives	25
4.1.1	Relevance of permanent priorities.....	28
4.2	Programme coherence	30
4.2.1	External coherence	30
4.2.2	Contribution to wider EU priorities.....	32
4.2.3	Policy linkages	33
4.3	Community added value.....	34
5.0	Efficiency.....	37
5.1	Programme inputs	37
5.1.1	Appropriateness of the budget	37
5.1.2	Organisational Model	39

5.1.3	Administrative requirements.....	40
5.1.4	Funding allocations.....	41
5.1.5	Size of grants.....	43
5.1.6	Communication.....	45
5.1.7	Funding mechanisms.....	45
5.1.8	Support Measures	46
5.1.9	Wider engagement	47
6.0	Effectiveness.....	49
6.1	Progress	49
6.2	Participation in the programme	57
6.2.1	New participants	57
6.2.2	Gender and social groups.....	58
6.2.3	Geography.....	60
6.3	Impact.....	63
6.3.1	Impact on organisations.....	63
6.3.2	Impact on participants.....	65
6.3.3	Impact on policy development.....	70
6.4	Sustainability	72
6.4.1	Dissemination activity	74
7.0	Summary of conclusions and draft recommendations	76
7.1	Relevance.....	76
7.1.1	Coherence	77
7.1.2	Community Added Value	77
7.2	Efficiency.....	77
7.3	Effectiveness.....	80
7.3.1	Progress	80
7.3.2	Participation.....	81
7.3.3	Impacts.....	82
7.3.4	Sustainability.....	83
7.3.5	Dissemination	84

List of figures

Figure 3.1	Intervention logic for the evaluation of the programme.....	17
Figure 3.2	Impact chain	21
Figure 4.1	How relevant are the following <i>general objectives</i> of the Europe for Citizens Programme to the needs of the citizens that your organisation deals with?	27
Figure 4.2	Q23 - How relevant are the following <i>specific objectives</i> of the Europe for Citizens Programme to the needs of the citizens that your organisation deals with?	27
Figure 4.3	Q7 - How has participation in the Europe for Citizens programme influenced your organisation?	35

Figure 6.1 Q9. Do you feel that the following particular groups or segments of society are adequately represented in your organisation's activities?.....	59
Figure 6.2 Geographical distribution (projects vs total population)	61
Figure 6.3 Geographical distribution (nationality of participants vs total population)	62

List of tables

Table 2.1 Key recommendations and Commission response.....	6
Table 2.2 Objectives of the Europe for Citizens Programme.....	8
Table 2.3 Comparison of original allocations with spending	9
Table 2.4 Outputs under Action 1.....	10
Table 2.5 Outputs under Action 2.....	12
Table 2.6 Outputs under Action 3.....	13
Table 2.7 Outputs under Action 4.....	13
Table 2.8 Types of activity supported.....	14
Table 4.1 Numbers of selected projects by annual priority, 2007 and 2008.....	29
Table 4.2 Q7 - How has participation in the Europe for Citizens programme influenced your organisation?	36
Table 5.1 Minimum and maximum grants, 2010.....	43
Table 5.2 Q30 -. If larger grants were available would your organisation be likely to change the types of activities it offers?.....	44
Table 6.1 Targets and Achievements, 2007 and 2008	50
Table 6.2 Q26 - To what extent do you feel that your organisation's activities contribute to achieving the following objectives of the Europe for Citizens Programme?	52
Table 6.3 Contribution of supported activities by action	54
Table 6.4 Contribution by type of activity.....	56
Table 6.5 Q11 Has your organisation received support from the Europe for Citizens Programme in previous years or under previous funding rounds?.....	57
Table 6.6 Q2 - As a result of attending this event did you do any of the following?	66
Table 6.7 Q4 As a result of your involvement in this event, are you more or less likely to?	67
Table 6.8 Q5 - As a result of taking part, do you?	67
Table 6.9 Q6 How far do you agree or disagree with the following statements?.....	68
Table 6.10 Q7 - Concerning this particular event do you think that as a result of your participation you will do any of the following?.....	69
Table 6.11 Q15 Which of your current activities would be likely to continue if European support was withdrawn or substantially reduced? What form would this take?.....	73
Table 6.12 Q12a Which methods have been used to communicate the results of your activities to the public?.....	74

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Purpose and scope of this report

This report presents results of the interim evaluation of the EU's Europe for Citizens programme (2007-2013), carried out by Ecorys on behalf of DG Communication of the European Commission. The work was commissioned under the Framework Contract for Evaluation, Impact Assessment and Related Services – EAC/03/06.

This interim evaluation report is designed to analyse the results obtained to date and report on qualitative and quantitative aspects of the implementation of the programme during the period 2007-09. This report has been prepared at the end of a year-long programme of research which began in November 2009. It describes the programme and its context, presents research findings based on the criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability and offers a set of conclusions and recommendations – for the current programme and for any future programme.

1.2 Acknowledgments

We would like to express our appreciation to all those who have taken the time to help this study, from European Commission staff to a wide variety of stakeholder organisations, beneficiaries and applicants. As ever, the contents of the report remain the responsibility of the authors, while the views expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the European Commission.

1.3 Structure of this report

The following sections are presented in this report:

- Description of the programme
- Evaluation context and methodology
- Relevance
- Efficiency
- Effectiveness and sustainability
- Conclusions and draft recommendations

2.0 Description of the Programme

2.1 Development of the programme

The Europe for Citizens Programme 2007-2013 follows on from the Community Action programme to promote active European Citizenship (civic participation) 2004-2006. This programme was established by the Council in January 2004, for a period of three years ending in December 2006. The overarching aims were to reinforce an open dialogue with civil society on the principles of transparency and democratic control and to intensify links between citizens of different countries. Although the EU had previously been supporting active European Citizenship for a number of years under various budget lines, there was no legal base for awarding grants in this field.

The programme had a budget of €72 million (an annual average of €24 million) and a specific remit to co-fund, through an operating grant, organisations pursuing an aim of general European interest in the field of active European Citizenship (organisations promoting European ideas and debate and organisations and "think tanks" promoting European values and objectives) and actions initiated by civil society organisations (actions by non-governmental organisations, associations and federations of European interest or cross-industry trade unions and town twinning projects). In total over 30 organisations received an operating grant, whereas around 250 NGOs, associations and federations and trade union projects received funding between 2004 and 2005. Over 2,800 town twinning projects received funding during the same period.

The ex-post evaluation of this programme¹ sought to evaluate its impact, but also to identify lessons and make recommendations for the implementation of the successor programme. These recommendations, and the response from the Commission on their implementation², are reproduced in table 2.1 below.

¹ ECOTEC (2006) Ex-post evaluation of the Community Action Programme to promote active European citizenship for DG Education and Culture of the European Commission

² European Commission (2007) Report on the evaluation of the "Active European Citizenship" Programme 2004-2006, COM(2007) 819 final

Table 2.1 Key recommendations and Commission response

Key Area	Recommendations	EC Responses
Relevance	Citizen involvement in the design of new programme; Focus on partnership and cross-sector working.	Public consultation undertaken and structured dialogue proposed for the entire programme period (to include communication with European umbrella organisations). Direct citizen involvement planned as a feature of 'Action 1', and citizens' panels integrated using new measures.
Coherence and Complementarity	<p>Synergies/networking between different activities and organisations</p> <p>Alternative approaches to bring citizens nearer to the EU;</p> <p>Partnerships between old and new Member States;</p> <p>Develop links between European programmes in the area of active citizenship;</p> <p>Increased time scale for Trade Union projects</p> <p>Building links with national level citizenship projects</p>	<p>Emphasis placed on partnerships and cross-sectoral perspectives across business, civil society and policy makers.</p> <p>Partnerships are a specific objective of the new programme, reflected in award criteria for all actions under the new programme.</p> <p>Horizontal approach adopted for the 2007-2013 period, especially to guide dissemination of results across thematic programmes.</p> <p>Proposed to improve contacts with national contacts responsible for civic participation. Feedback mechanism for Member States provided through national level co-ordination and support structures established for the 'Europe for Citizens Programme'.</p>
Effectiveness	<p>Budget increase or remit of programme is narrowed.</p> <p>Use of external assessors of proposals to maintain impartiality</p> <p>Incorporating measures able to increase impact</p>	<p>Establishment of Executive Agency (EACEA) contributes to strengthening programme and grant management.</p> <p>Strengthening innovation and structuring measures to increase impact through citizen involvement, greater coherence and improving programme management.</p>
Sustainability	<p>The results obtained across different strands of the programme are established.</p> <p>Database created with potential partners and projects.</p>	<p>Establishment of strategy and action plan for exploitation/dissemination of results</p> <p>Acknowledged usefulness of online repository, support for partner matching</p>

This resulted in a number of changes being implemented in the current programme; the main points of difference are as follows:

- Extending the range of activities aimed at citizens (Action 1 – Active Citizens for Europe) from a focus on town twinning to include networking and partnership between a number of twinned towns, often dealing with themes of European significance ('thematic networks'). A number of the supported activities are in receipt of multi-annual grants.
- Development of citizens' projects with a transnational and cross-sectoral dimension (measure 2.1), alongside the funding of support measures aimed at the exchange of best practices, pooling of experiences and development of new skills in the area of active citizenship. In 2009, this has included a specific measure (1.6) aimed at exploring innovative ways of promoting the international mobility of individuals and civil society organisations (CSOs).
- Reorganisation of the civil society measures (action 2 – Active Civil Society in Europe) that previously provided support for civil society groups, NGOs, federations and cross-industry trade unions. The programme now focuses on two kinds of support: operating grants to civil society organisations and policy research organisations active at European level, including annual and multi-annual grants; and support for specific projects that develop co-operation between civil society organisations from different countries and operating at different levels (e.g. local, regional, national or European level).
- Development of Action 3 – Together for Europe, which focuses on disseminating the results of the various actions through the use of high-visibility events, studies and information tools. This is managed in-house by the European Commission.
- Establishment of Action 4 - Active European Remembrance. This funds a range of projects commemorating the victims of Nazism and Stalinism and supports the preservation of historic sites and archives as well as a range of events and production/media projects. This action was developed in response to specific demands from the European Parliament to also include the victims of Stalinism, and was previously administered under the Culture Programme before being transferred to Europe for Citizens.

2.2 Programme aims and objectives

The Decision¹ establishing the Europe for Citizens' programme 2007-2013 set out its general and specific objectives in the following way:

¹ Decision No 1904/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2006, establishing for the period 2007 to 2013 the programme 'Europe for Citizens' to promote active European citizenship

Table 2.2 Objectives of the Europe for Citizens Programme

General objectives
1. To give citizens the opportunity to interact and participate in constructing an ever closer Europe, which is democratic and world-oriented, united in and enriched through its cultural diversity, thus developing citizenship of the European Union
2. To develop a sense of European identity, based on common values, history and culture
3. To foster a sense of ownership of the European Union amongst its citizens
4. To enhance tolerance and mutual understanding between European citizens respecting and promoting cultural and linguistic diversity, while contributing to intercultural dialogue
Specific objectives
1. To bring people together from local communities across Europe to share and exchange experiences, opinions and values, to learn from history and to build for the future
2. To foster action, debate and reflection related to European citizenship and democracy, shared values, common history and culture through cooperation within civil society organisations at European level
3. To bring Europe closer to its citizens by promoting Europe's values and achievements, while preserving the memory of its past
4. To encourage interaction between citizens and civil society organisations from all participating countries, contributing to intercultural dialogue and bringing to the fore both Europe's diversity and unity, with particular attention to activities aimed at developing closer ties between citizens from Member States of the European Union as constituted on 30 April 2004 and those from Member States which have acceded since that date

Source: Decision No 1904/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council

2.3 Structure and budget

A sum of €215m was allocated to the implementation of the programme over the period 1 January 2007 to 31 December 2013 (with the annual amount increasing gradually from € 24.9m in 2007 to € 35.9 m in 2010 (including variations from the Budgetary Authority). According to information provided by DG Communication and EACEA (in annual activity reports, spending breakdowns and lists of successful applications), around €84m¹ was allocated between 2007 and 2009, representing 39% of the total programme budget. There is therefore no evidence of the start-up delays that can sometimes affect the early years of programmes, and no shortage of take-up from project promoters.

The Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council also set out indicatively in its Annex what proportion of the total programme budget should be allocated to each of the four Actions and this information is compared to available data on actual spending in table 2.3 below.

¹ We have not been able to obtain a full breakdown of spending in 2007, specifically for administrative costs or spending on high-profile events or information packages. If we assume spending on these items was consistent with 2008 and 2009, total spend approaches €88m, or 41% of the allocated budget

Table 2.3 Comparison of original allocations with spending

Action	Decision %	2007 %	2008 %	2009 %	% 2007-2009
1 - Active Citizens for Europe	>45%	52%	48%	48%	49%
2 - Active Civil Society	31%	34%	30%	30%	31%
3 - Together for Europe	10%	8%	7%	6%	6%
4 - Active European Remembrance	4%	6%	5%	6%	6%
Operational/ administrative costs	10-11%	n/a	10%	11%	8%

Sources: Decision No 1904/2006/EC, Annual Reports and of DG Education and Culture and DG Communication plus data on approved applications from EACEA

As we do not have complete spend data for 2007, this comparison must focus on 2008 and 2009. This shows that spending by Action line is broadly in line with the allocations set out in the Decision, although spending has been higher for Action 4 - Active European Remembrance and lower for Action 3 – Together for Europe.

2.4 Activity between 2007 and 2009

The following sections describe the Actions in further detail, in terms of their constituent Measures, the types of activities supported and their target groups, listing spend and outputs wherever available.

2.4.1 Action 1 – Active Citizens for Europe

Action 1 is directed specifically at activities involving citizens and is split into a number of measures: town twinning, which supports local links between municipalities; thematic networks of twinned towns; citizens' projects, which explore innovative methods of citizens' participation; and support measures which provide tools for developing and improving the quality of projects. In 2009 there was a separate call for innovative actions, designed to develop and test new forms of transnational mobility and mentoring between civil society organisations. The following table shows outputs and allocated funding for each of the sub-measures under Action 1, based on data for approved applications from EACEA.

Table 2.4 Outputs under Action 1

	2007	2008	2009	TOTAL
Action 1 – Active Citizens for Europe				
Town twinning citizens meetings (1.1)				
N° of projects	904	1,111	820	2835
N° of towns involved	n/a	3,630	3,175	6,805
Funding allocated	€ 7,983,739	€ 10,234,271	€ 8,373,229	€ 26,591,238
N° of participants	668,387	984,567	799,500	2,452,454
N° of participants moving across Europe	71,000	75,000	82,500	228,500
Proportion involving citizens of new MS	54%	n/a	n/a	n/a
% multilateral (at least 3 towns in 3 countries)	46%	49%	52%	n/a
Networks of twinned towns (1.2)				
N° of projects	52	68	96	216
Funding allocated	€ 961,924	€ 2,205,931	€ 3,910,863	€ 7,078,717
N° of participants	6,042	53,910	145,000	204,952
Mobility measures (1.6 - from 2009)				
N° of projects			9	9
Funding allocated			€ 1,156,595	€ 1,156,595
N° of participants			n/a	n/a
Citizens projects (2.1 – from 2008)				
N° of projects	0	18	11	29
Funding allocated		€ 2,133,224	€ 1,869,845	€ 4,003,069
N° of participants		n/a	n/a	n/a
N° of countries		25	25	50
Support measures (2.2 – from 2008)				
N° of organisations		16	14	30
Proportion from new MS		40%	30%	n/a
Funding allocated		€ 669,726	€ 1,150,687	€ 1,820,413
N° of participants		41,291	39,732	81,023

	2007	2008	2009	TOTAL
N° of operating grants - designated organisations ¹	1	1	1	1
Funding allocated	n/a	€ 230,000	€ 230,000	€ 690,000

2.4.2 Action 2 – Active Civil Society for Europe

Action 2 aims to support civil society organisations and policy research organisations, due to their role as intermediaries between European citizens and the European Union and their ability to provide ideas and reflections on issues such as active citizenship and European values. This action is divided into three measures:

- Structural support (annual and multi-annual operating grants) for European policy research organisations (think tanks)
- Structural support (annual and multi-annual operating grants) for civil society organisations active at a European level
- Projects initiated by civil society organisations

The outputs and funding allocations under Action 2 are reproduced in the table below.

¹ Organisations of a general European interest designated to receive an operating grant under action 1 in 2007, 2008, and 2009: Council of European Municipalities and Regions.

Table 2.5 Outputs under Action 2

	2007	2008	2009	TOTAL
Action 2 – Active Civil Society				
Structural support for policy research and civil society organisations (1 and 2)				
N° of operating grants - policy research	13	11	17	41
N° of new beneficiaries	15%	n/a	53%	n/a
N° of operating grants - civil society	17	28	28	73
N° of new beneficiaries	29%	60%	16%	n/a
Funding allocated	€ 2,552,007	€ 3,912,933	€ 4,405,239	€ 10,870,179
Projects initiated by civil society organisations (3)				
N° of projects	108	131	127	366
Proportion from new MS	34%	37%	42%	n/a
Funding allocated	€ 3,362,101	€ 4,079,920	€ 4,204,428	€ 11,646,448
N° of participants	n/a	n/a	27,305	n/a
N° of operating grants - designated organisations¹				
Funding allocated		€ 1,775,000	€ 1,775,000	€ 3,550,000

2.4.3 Action 3 – Together for Europe

Action 3 is administered centrally by the European Commission, not the Executive Agency (EACEA) and is designed to broaden knowledge and understanding of the European Union and active citizenship. This is achieved through high-visibility events (a range of events, conferences and prizes), studies, surveys and opinion polls as well as a variety of information and dissemination tools. Europe for Citizens Points (PECs) are also supported through Action 3.

¹ Organisations of a general European interest designated to receive an operating grant under action 2 in 2007, 2008, and 2009 : Notre Europe, Institut für Europäische Politik, Social Plattform, European Movement International

Table 2.6 Outputs under Action 3

	2007	2008	2009	TOTAL
Action 3 – Together for Europe				
High-visibility events	2	3	3	8
Funding allocated	n/a	€ 851,512	€ 776,880	n/a
Studies		1	1	2
Funding allocated		€ 300,000	€ 167,756	€ 467,756
Information and dissemination tools/ packages	5	3	3	11
Funding allocated	n/a	€ 24,935	€ 66,514	n/a
N° of operating grants - Designated organisations¹	3	3	3	9
Funding allocated	n/a	€ 495,000	€ 495,000	n/a
N° of Europe for Citizens Points supported		17	17	17

2.4.4 Action 4 – Active European Remembrance

Action 4 supports a range of projects aimed at commemorating the victims of Nazism and Stalinism, but also preserving the main sites and archives, promoting reflections on history as well as networking between organisations active in this field. Projects usually take the form of events (such as conferences, seminars, workshops, debates, meetings; training) or production and realisation activities (including publications, websites, broadcasts, audio-visual material, studies, education and training materials and ICT applications).

The outputs and funding allocations associated with Action 4 are reproduced below.

Table 2.7 Outputs under Action 4

	2007	2008	2009	TOTAL
Action 4 - Active European Remembrance				
No. of projects	36	49	56	141
Funding allocated	€ 1,097,754	€ 1,719,233	€ 2,100,550	€ 4,917,537
No. of participants	n/a	n/a	12,040	n/a

¹ Organisations of a general European interest designated to receive an operating grant under action 3 in 2007, 2008, and 2009 : Association Jean Monnet, Centre Européen Robert Schuman, European Network for Education and Training (Eunet)

2.4.5 Types of activities supported

In the absence of aggregated programme-level data on the activities undertaken by supported organisations, it is necessary to use a variety of sources of information. Analysis of a sample of final reports shows that the programme encourages diversity in subject matter and enables a large range of different types of organisations to participate – from the small and local to the larger national associations.

We can also use data from the telephone survey of projects to gain a more quantitative picture. Table 2.8 combines survey responses with programme level data, weighting individual responses by measure to gain a picture of total outputs across the programme. This shows that the bulk of supported organisations are involved in organising events or activities (approximately 3,500) information provision (2,700) or training and knowledge (2,400). More detail on this weighting process is provided in Annex Three.

Table 2.8 Types of activity supported

Supported activities	Yes	% Respondents	Programme Total
Organise events or activities (meetings, workshops, conferences).	207	89%	3,538
Provide information or disseminate materials (publications, newsletters, websites, DVDs)	181	78%	2,665
Provide training or facilitate the exchange of knowledge or best practice.	147	63%	2,443
Meet general administrative or organisational costs	101	44%	1,893
Manage or administer a network or organisations	92	40%	1,543
Carry out studies, surveys or opinion polls	52	22%	653
Manage or preserve historical sites or archives	38	16%	475

Base: Respondents to beneficiary survey (232). Programme total is by measure to reflect programme composition

3.0 Evaluation Context and Methodology

3.1 Situating the evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation is to provide an external interim evaluation of the Europe for Citizens Programme with the primary aims being to provide:

- an overview of the results obtained in the first three years of the programme;
- an assessment of qualitative and quantitative aspects of implementation; and
- recommendations and guidance on how implementation of the remaining four years of the programme could be improved.

In addition:

- ▶ By providing a detailed analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the programme, the interim evaluation is intended to feed into reflections on the preparation of the post-2013 programme (in the field of European citizenship).
- ▶ The interim evaluation is intended to provide input for the design of the final evaluation report of the implementation of the full programme 2007-2013. This final evaluation task includes preparing guidance on suitable indicators for use in monitoring the programme and developing a new result indicator measuring the degree of civil society involvement in promoting civic participation at the European level
- ▶ The interim evaluation is also expected to provide examples of good practice or successful model projects under each action.
- ▶ The draft Dissemination Plan provided in the ToR will be elaborated further to provide the basis for complete dissemination of the evaluation results.

The contract provides for support to be given in preparation for an Impact Assessment of the future programme, specifically in relation to the design of an online consultation and the analysis of the results of that consultation. This element of the contract is dealt with separately and does not form part of this report.

3.2 Evaluation methodology

Our approach to this exercise involved the application of the standard evaluation model¹ of DG Budget of the European Commission, which is the basis for all evaluations carried out at the present time for DG Education and Culture and DG Communication. This model was customised to the requirements of the Terms of Reference (ToR) of the evaluation and to the specific circumstances of the Europe for Citizens Programme 2007-13. Based on the DG Budget model, an intervention logic was developed which featured a hierarchy of objectives for the programme as well as a set of intended effects (outputs, results and impacts) that could be expected to flow from the activities undertaken in pursuit of those objectives. This intervention logic guided the

¹ Evaluating EU activities: A practical guide for Commission services; European Commission DG Budget 2004.

particular way in which the evaluation questions were approached and also the specific research tasks that were undertaken.

In the remainder of this section we present the intervention logic and then list the evaluation questions and the research tasks that were undertaken to gather the evidence necessary to answer those questions. Finally, we reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of the methodology in order to learn lessons for any future evaluation.

3.3 Intervention logic

An important element of the study has been the development of an intervention logic for the Europe for Citizens programme. This has enabled us to build our understanding of what the programme has set out to achieve, which was a vital first step that enabled judgements to be made in relation to the aims, objectives and impacts of the programme. For this we used the 'hierarchy of objectives' approach where:

- Operational objectives specify outputs directly produced/supplied through the implementation process;
- Specific objectives specify the short-term results that occur at the level of direct beneficiaries/recipients of assistance;
- Intermediate objectives specify the short to medium-term effects (or intermediate impacts) on both direct and indirect beneficiaries/recipients of assistance;
- General objectives specify the longer term and more diffuse effects.

It should be noted that no operational or intermediate objectives were defined in the legal basis of Europe for Citizens, a point to which we return below.

The intervention logic draws primarily on the objectives set out in the legal basis for the programme¹, and was informed by a review of relevant policy material and consultations with staff at the European Commission. In moving from the objectives set out in the Decision (set out in table 2.1 above) to an intervention logic for the evaluation, we have taken the following considerations into account:

Firstly, the first **general objective** is of a different quality to the others. Objectives 2-4 deal with the intended effects of the programme on individuals. Indeed, in the Proposal of the Decision² they are referred to as the 'building blocks' for the involvement of citizens. In contrast, Objective 1 essentially provides an over-arching global objective related to the development of active European Union citizenship. We therefore considered that for the purposes of the evaluation this is more appropriate as a global objective, leaving us with three general objectives.

Secondly, with regard to the **specific objectives**, on close examination it can be seen that there is, again, an important difference that divides one of the objectives from the rest. In this case, Objective 4 is drafted in a more general sense, and in fact this is confirmed by the Proposal for the Decision where it is indicated that this objective (though phrased in a slightly different way) should be taken into account throughout the other specific

¹ Decision No 1904/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2006, establishing for the period 2007 to 2013 the programme 'Europe for Citizens' to promote active European citizenship

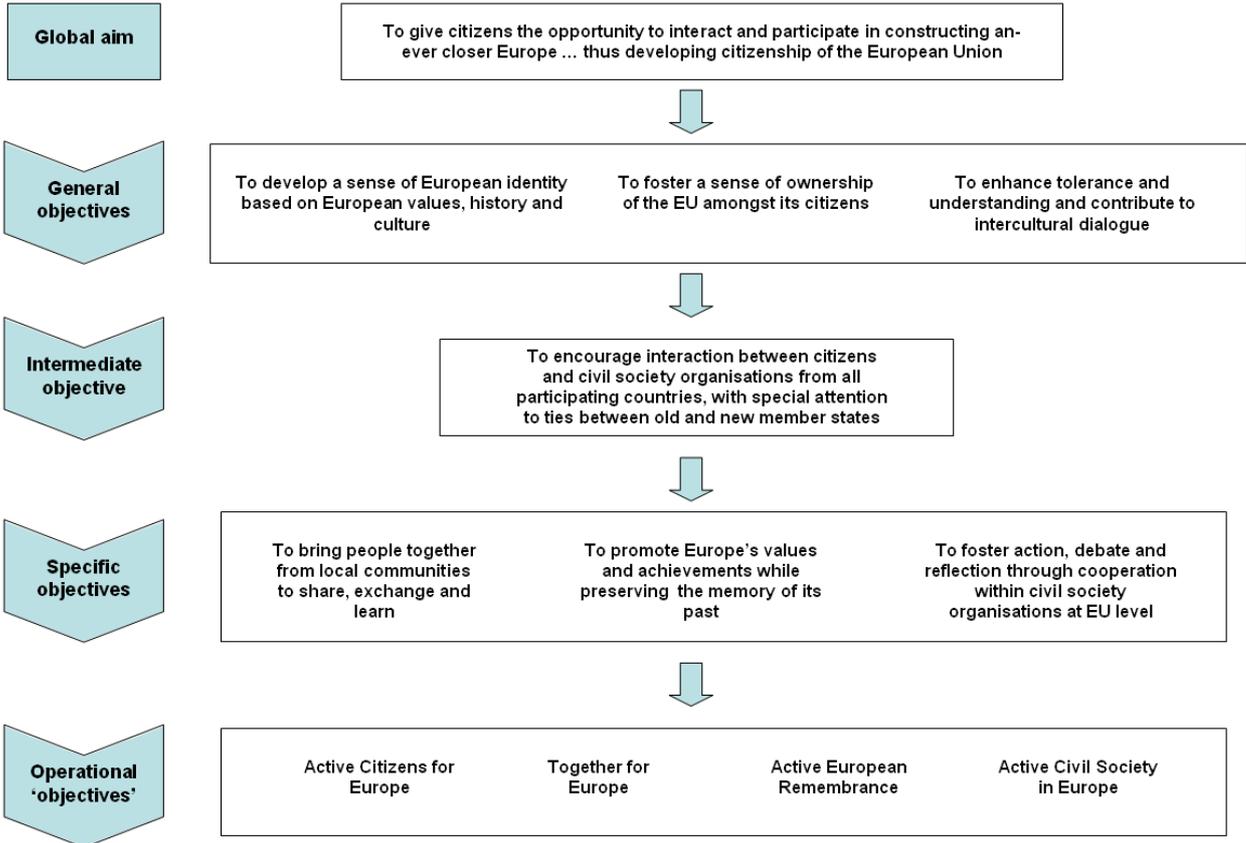
² p.1 Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing for the period 2007-2013 the programme 'Citizens for Europe' to promote active European citizenship, Brussels, 6.4.2005, COM(2005) 116 final

objectives and implemented throughout the programme. This objective therefore has more of a horizontal character, and this can be reflected in the intervention logic by placing it as an intermediate objective between the general and specific objectives. This also serves to emphasise the centrality of transnational exchanges and cooperation activities in the programme's design, activities which are seen as involving both citizens directly (as in attendance at town twinning events) and also civil society organisations (in a sense 'on behalf' of citizens).

Thirdly, with regard to the **operational objectives**, as we noted above, these were not defined for the programme in the Decision and instead are simply the programme actions. It was therefore considered appropriate to use the main titles of the actions in lieu of operational objectives, rather than to try to link each sub-action to the specific objectives. Adopting this approach means that an intervention logic can be presented that is clear and will provide a succinct basis for understanding the main intended impact chains within the programme.

The intervention logic is shown below in Figure 3.1, and is followed by a commentary on its individual components.

Figure 3.1 Intervention logic for the evaluation of the programme



3.3.1 Global aim

The global aim of the programme relates to the concept of active European citizenship or civic participation. While the definition of this concept is articulated in detail within EU citizenship policy in general – it can

nevertheless be subject to a wide range of interpretations by the general public, other stakeholders and indeed national policy-makers. This means that the concept can benefit from wide appeal; but equally it can suffer from a perception that it is vague or insufficiently defined. By way of clarification, the following points are important:

- Active citizenship is seen as playing an important role in a variety of areas, perhaps most directly in tackling racism, xenophobia and intolerance, but also in strengthening social cohesion and helping in the development of democracy¹.
- The concept of active European citizenship articulated in the Decision is not just about citizenship in general as extended to the European level – i.e. raising awareness outside of the borders of an individual's country, although that is clearly important in itself. It also concerns the development of a 'sense of ownership and identify' with the European Union – i.e. not just with 'Europe' per se but with what the Proposal for the Decision calls 'the dense network of institutional, social and political relationships' of which the EU is composed. This network, the document continues, *'has become even richer in the context of an enlarged Europe and will continue to do so in the context of future enlargements. European citizens are at the heart of this process and their active involvement is essential in order to ensure a democratic and balanced development of the European Union.'* To this end, the Europe for Citizens programme is needed to help citizens to be *'aware of their duties as citizens and become actively involved in the process of European integration, developing a sense of belonging and a European identity...This programme would encourage cooperation between citizens and their organisations from different countries in order to meet, to act together and to develop their own ideas in a European environment that goes beyond a national vision and which respects their diversity.'*² Active citizenship therefore primarily targets the involvement of citizens directly in the creation, realisation and expression of a European identity through the European Union, either as individuals participating in activities or through civil society organisations.
- The programme is also seen by the Commission as a way of bringing the European Union and its institutions 'closer' to the citizens of Member States, through the mechanism of the Union's institutions maintaining and fostering 'open, transparent and regular dialogue with organised civil society' which will promote citizen's participation in public life and decision-making³. 'Organised civil society' organisations are seen as those operating at European, national, regional and local levels. Not only are they seen as key vehicles through which the active participation of citizens can be encouraged but also as 'intermediaries between Europe and its citizens'⁴. As noted, transnational cooperation between these organisations is seen as a vital component of the programme.

3.3.2 General and intermediate objectives

The general objectives relate to high-level policy objectives or aspirations. As set out in the intervention logic, they relate very well to the intended impacts of the programme on individuals' attitudes. That said, it is usually

¹ Item (5) in the preamble to Decision 1904/2006/EC

² p. 2 Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing for the period 2007-2013 the programme 'Citizens for Europe' to promote active European citizenship, Brussels, 6.4.2005, COM(2005) 116 final

³ Item (9) in the preamble to Decision 1904/2006/EC

⁴ Item (12) in the preamble to Decision 1904/2006/EC

very difficult to measure accurately the impact of individual policy interventions at the level of global aims or general objectives. A common approach is to draw conclusions on the extent to which the intervention has contributed to the overall objective(s), by extrapolating the findings at the level of specific objectives or operational activities.

In the case of Europe for Citizens, the general objectives are long-term aspirations; and their prospects for achievement will be influenced by a large number of policies at EU and national level, but also by more general political and media debate, as well as individual experiences and interactions. They are very broadly defined, but also subjective, with different meanings for different people. The experience we have built up from previous surveys on Europe for Citizens in 2009 and Town Twinning in 2007/08 supports the view that an assessment of impact at this level has to be based more on the opinions and perceptions of stakeholders and participants than on any objective or quantitative criteria. These limitations notwithstanding, the approach adopted was to focus the evaluation in particular on the effects at the level of social organisations rather than individuals – as we discuss further below.

In relation to the general objectives themselves, these are clearly strongly related to one another. For example, "developing a sense of European identity, based on European values" is strongly linked to work on "enhancing tolerance and mutual understanding", which are defined as key European values. This means that activities in these areas are likely to contribute in some way to the achievement of both objectives, although the extent of this contribution will be very difficult to quantify. This highlights the interlinked nature of activities and the wider objectives of the programme.

Below the general objectives, we have placed an intermediate objective, owing to its horizontal nature, as argued above. This serves to emphasise the intention of the programme to stimulate citizenship across all countries, and thus emphasises within the intervention logic the centrality of transnational cooperation – both between citizens and their civil society organisations.

3.3.3 Specific and operational objectives

The general and intermediate objectives are realised through three specific objectives. They are well constructed in that they are consistent in referring to the main mechanisms through which they will be achieved, i.e. by bringing people together, through civil society organisations, and by promotion. They also clearly correspond to the direct effects of activities, or the results that beneficiaries are expected to achieve.

In terms of the causal relationships between the specific objectives and the action lines, the design of the programme means that each of the actions contributes in some way to each of the specific objectives. The analysis undertaken to construct the intervention logic would support this. At the same time, it is clear that there are some variations in the strengths of the relationships between specific objectives and action lines, and these have been tested over the course of the evaluation.

3.4 Intended effects

In terms of how these components of the intervention logic have been evaluated, result and output indicators have helped to assess the extent to which short-term objectives have been achieved at the level of direct beneficiaries, providing insights on the quality of the projects supported, although less about their wider utility.

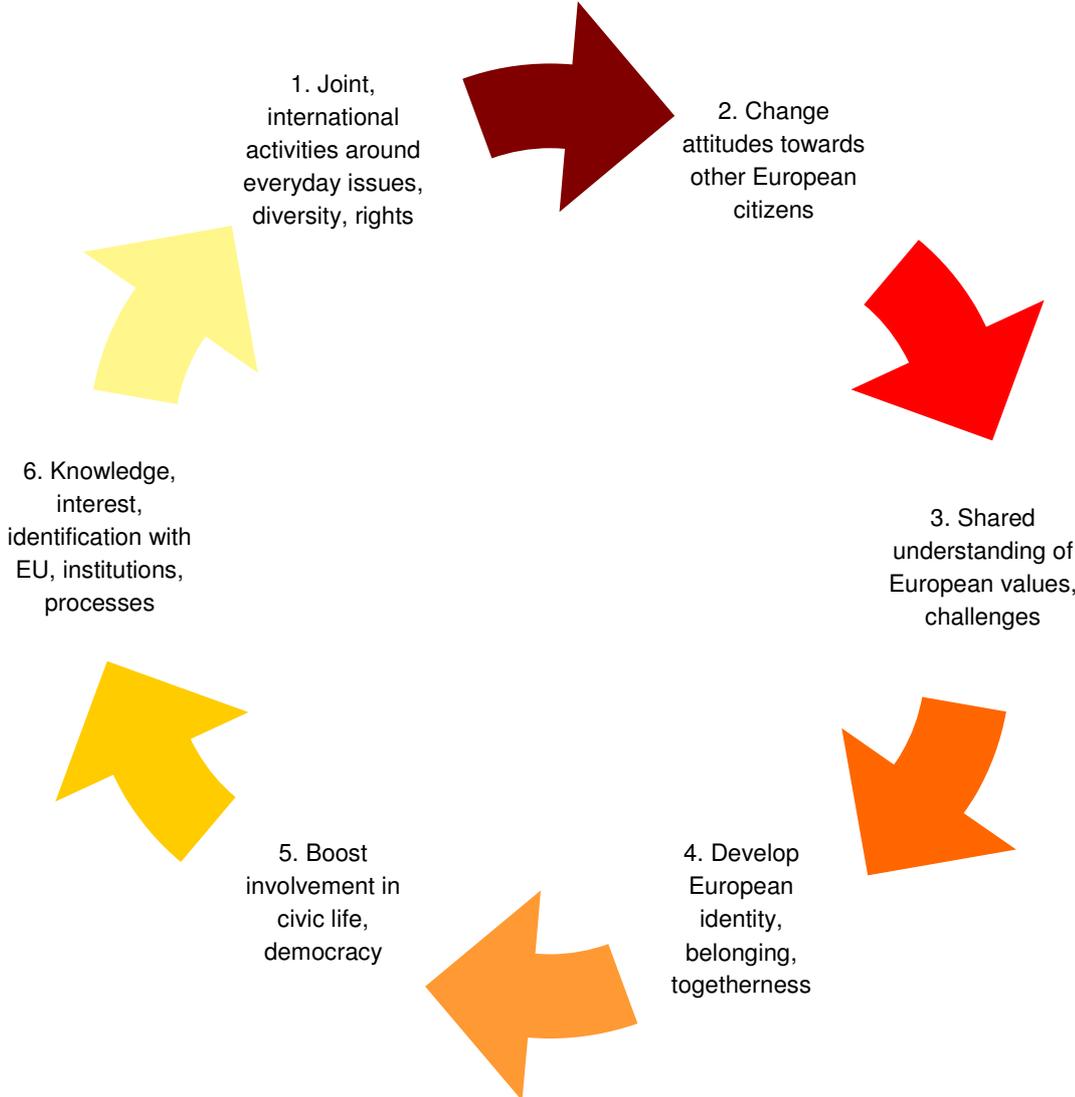
For the purposes of this study, beneficiaries have been defined as organisations in receipt of funding, rather than the individuals who took part in activities. The main focus was on developing a picture of what the funding allowed organisations to achieve, but also gathering their views on the impact of these activities on the individuals taking part and the implications for wider society. In relation to the individuals who have taken part in the activities, we drew upon findings from our earlier work on the development of impact indicators for the Europe for Citizens Programme.

A further rationale for this approach is based on the argument that the programme is likely to achieve multiplier effects by impacting on bodies active in civil society which have the potential to achieve wider, longer term and more sustainable effects on individual citizens. Action 2 is certainly based on this premise to some extent. Furthermore, as the programme impact assessment pointed out: *'Civil society organisations have an important multiplier effect and allow a wide range of activities to take place. It appears necessary to target a wide spectrum of organisations, in order to be able to adapt to the changes, needs and expressions of civil society and to integrate all forms of citizens' involvement into Community and public life.'*¹

The analysis of the Programme's objectives shows that Europe for Citizens sets out to achieve ambitious goals through everyday activities, and in order to judge impact on those taking part it is important to consider the process by which this is able to take place, by understanding the linkages between direct or short term impacts and more indirect or longer-term impacts. Our understanding of the chain of impacts is reproduced below, showing the way in which one stage in the process can lead to another. Clearly there is likely to be a stronger, more direct influence on the earlier stages of the chain, and this will diminish with every stage, as more external factors come into play. Equally, the model elucidates the connection between citizenship and civic participation and the role that the European dimension may play in this. Given the right conditions, a 'virtuous circle' can be established.

¹ Commission staff working document - Annex to the Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing for the period 2007-2013 the programme "Citizens for Europe" to promote active European citizenship - Impact assessment {COM(2005) 116 final} /* SEC/2005/0442 */: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=SEC:2005:0442:FIN:EN:HTML>

Figure 3.2 Impact chain



This has been complemented by exploring the views of supported projects and organisations on the results and impacts of their activities, using a more “bottom-up” assessment of the extent to which their work contributes to meeting the specific and general objectives of the programme.

Further information detailing our approach to collecting indicator data and selecting information able to answer the evaluation questions is provided in the annexes.

3.5 Research tasks

The following tasks have been carried out during the course of the evaluation:

1. *Evaluation inception*: Scoping and validation of intervention logic, development of research tools, and refinement of our approach, culminating in inception report.
2. *Desk research*: Review of literature relating to the programme, wider EU policy and social/economic needs in the area of active citizenship, collection of programme data. This has also included consultations with the staff responsible for the management of Europe for Citizens, formerly in DG Education and Culture and as of spring 2010 in DG Communication, staff from other Directorates-General, as well as with major stakeholders such as the Council for European Municipalities and Regions and the Social Platform of European NGOs.
3. *Online survey of stakeholders*. Invitations were emailed to 133 stakeholder organisations, composed of Europe for Citizens Points, national and regional twinning co-ordinators, as well as civil society organisations and policy research organisations active at a European level. At the time of writing 43 organisations have accessed the survey, with at least 30 answering most questions and 25 providing their details at the end. We have 13 responses from Europe for Citizens Points, 11 from civil society stakeholders, 8 from twinning co-ordinators and 7 policy research organisations. The survey included a range of closed and open questions, and responses are broken down by stakeholder group wherever possible.
4. *Telephone survey of beneficiaries*. From a sampling frame of 560 projects and supported organisations from 2009 and early 2010, 232 telephone interviews have been completed, a response rate of 41%. This breaks down to 121 under Action 1, 67 under Action 2 and 47 under Action 4. Relatively broad coverage was also achieved by country, though no responses were received for Albania, Estonia, Luxembourg or FYR Macedonia. The sample sizes achieved for each country mean that only relatively few are robust enough for individual analysis, although results can be broken down by new and old member states or by broader geographic region.
5. *Telephone survey of ineligible and unsuccessful projects*. 70 interviews were completed, providing useful external perspectives on the programme, its aims and objectives, processes and any barriers to greater coverage or participation.
6. *Case studies*. The case studies provided an opportunity to test the emerging findings in greater detail and provide extra qualitative information in a number of areas (especially the impact on beneficiaries and participants, good practice, new ideas, dissemination and longer-term sustainability). We have carried out research and interviews of 13 organisations (representing 15 projects) from across Europe and all action lines.

3.6 Strengths and weaknesses of the approach

A number of strengths and weaknesses of the approach taken were identified during the evaluation process. In order to draw lessons for future evaluations, we discuss them here.

- A set of programme data was provided by EACEA. Given the diversity of actions and activities across years, it proved challenging to process this data into a coherent and consistent database. However, we believe the data presented in this report is sufficient to offer an adequate picture of the volume of support provided thus far in the life of the programme and the outputs this has generated.
- There is a shortage of objective, aggregate data on the outputs, results and impacts associated with supported activities. We have therefore supplemented the available programme data with quantitative information from the surveys, scaling this up to the whole programme. We have also reviewed the information contained in a sample of the final reports for completed projects, held by EACEA. 26 reports have been analysed, with all relevant information on activities, outputs, results and impacts extracted. The projects were selected at random from the files, and we sought to obtain a good distribution by Action line and geography.
- As Europe for Citizens aims to influence individual attitudes and behaviours, a longitudinal (before and after) approach would be the best way of measuring the impact of participation. This is currently impossible as we do not have access to the details of participants before they come into contact with supported organisations or activities.
- We have no way of objectively assessing the programme's influence on wider society, as so many other factors (i.e. media coverage, national government policies, individual interactions) influence trends in terms of active citizenship or civic participation. However, the impact survey does allow us to make judgements on the effects of participation, and the ways in which the programme seeks to exert impact through supported organisations and individuals.
- Assessing the impact of the programme on society, on beneficiaries, or on policy development often depends on the views of beneficiaries, stakeholders and participants. Wherever possible we have set out the ways in which the programme is able to exert a wider impact.
- Although there are a number of contextual indicators we can use to set the scene, it is impossible to establish a causal link between social phenomena and the achievements of the programme.
- The sampling frames for the surveys have to be drawn from organisations that have had some contact with the programme, meaning that it is very difficult to establish external views or assess other specific factors such as levels of awareness or success of dissemination efforts. This was one of the reasons behind the survey of ineligible and unsuccessful bids, which was able to explore some views from outside the circle of supported organisations.
- The case studies have provided a way to triangulate the findings from other research tasks and to obtain more detailed, contextualised information on the issues affecting different types of project activity or beneficiary. The 13 organisations (representing 15 projects) were selected from those who had

taken part in the (more quantitative) telephone survey of beneficiaries and had consented to taking part in further research. Each one took part in an additional, less-structured interview, with their responses coded to correspond with the research questions and evaluation topics. Most also provided additional materials on their activities and results and this has been included in the analysis wherever relevant.

- At this interim stage it is difficult to draw definite conclusions on the medium/ longer term and indirect impacts of the Europe for Citizens Programme. However, the evaluation has allowed us to gather evidence in order to draw conclusions about what those impacts are likely to be.

4.0 Relevance

4.1 Relevance of programme objectives

EQ1: To what extent have the programme's objectives as laid down in article 1 of the Council Decision, proved relevant to the need of citizens?

As highlighted in Section 3.3, the programme operates within the overarching aim of "giving citizens the opportunity to interact and participate in constructing an ever-closer Europe, thus developing citizenship of the European Union". It is based on the premise that activities around mutual understanding, diversity, dialogue and respect for others will create changes in the attitudes of participants towards other European citizens. This, in turn, can help to develop positive impacts for citizens such as an increased sense of belonging and European identity, based on a shared understanding of European values, culture, history and heritage. In addition it is also designed to boost their involvement in democratic processes (as a less immediate or direct consequence) and their knowledge of and interest in the European Union, EU institutions and processes. Ideally, this should create a virtuous circle, encouraging citizens to come together, act together and develop future activities together.

There are a number of indicators of a continuing need for the programme. First, there is evidence of on-going disillusionment and disinterest amongst European citizens towards EU institutions and the wider process of European integration. This was thrown into sharp relief by the rejection of the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe (by France and the Netherlands in 2005). This led to the suspension of the Constitution ratification process and the European Commission's Plan D to strengthen dialogue, debate and democracy in Europe¹ in the context of which the Europe for Citizens Programme is seen as an important tool². Since then, the need to continue with efforts to promote active European citizenship in order to address the 'democratic deficit' (the lack of connection that citizens across the Member States feel with European institutions) has been emphasised by events such as Ireland's rejection of the Treaty of Lisbon in 2008 and the lowest turn-out ever recorded in European Parliament elections (43%) in 2009.

Secondly, the challenge of effectively promoting mutual understanding, identity and knowledge across Member States has been further intensified by the enlargement of the EU through the accession of 12 new states into the European Union in 2004 and 2007. This presents the challenge of bringing about a shared understanding of cultures, tradition and heritage of both the "old" and "new" Member States as well a shared understanding of European culture and values across the 27 countries of the enlarged EU. Recent elections have also highlighted increasing levels of support for political parties with a nationalist or xenophobic agenda, especially, but by no means exclusively, in the new Member States.

¹ COM(2005) 494 final of 13 October 2005: Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions " The Commission's contribution to the period of reflection and beyond: Plan D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate"

² Europe for Citizens Programme 2007-2013: Programme Guide, p6

These challenges have arguably served to heighten the need for European level programme activity to promote understanding and mutual respect between all Member States, with a focus on encouraging active citizenship and greater involvement in democratic processes in the widest sense.

Thirdly, the promotion of active citizenship is linked to but distinct from the rights and responsibilities incorporated in the concept of citizenship of the European Union. EU Citizenship has evolved over a long period of time, arguably beginning with the 1957 Treaty establishing the European Economic Community. This incorporated the right to reside in another Member State, in conjunction with the right to work. The Single European Act of 1986 took this process further by extending a right of residence in another Member State to all those not engaged in employment. The concept of European citizenship was first established by the Maastricht Treaty of 1992, and further strengthened by the Amsterdam Treaty of 1997. This status now applies to all nationals of a Member State of the European Union, with EU citizenship complementing national citizenship rather than replacing it.

The 2000 Charter of Fundamental Rights¹ confirmed a number of rights associated with citizenship, including the right to vote and to stand as a candidate in both European and municipal elections, freedom of movement and residence and the right to diplomatic and consular protection. It also set out a number of new rights in relation to EU institutions, namely to good administration, access to documents and the EU ombudsman, as well as the right to petition the European Parliament.

The Lisbon Treaty² brings together many of these provisions, with Article 8 A stating that while the functioning of the Union is founded on representative democracy, at the same time “every citizen shall have the right to participate in the democratic life of the Union”. Article 8 B goes further, setting out the duties of EU institutions, specifically in terms of exchanging views, maintaining dialogue and carrying out broad consultations with citizens and representative associations. The Lisbon Treaty also introduces a new form of public participation in European Union policy shaping, the European Citizens’ Initiative, which enables one million citizens who are nationals of a significant number of Member States to call directly on the European Commission to bring forward an initiative of interest to them in an area of EU competence. It is hoped that the Council and Parliament will reach final agreement on the ECI before the end of 2010, to allow the first initiatives to be brought forward in 2011³. In the context of these measures, it is worth noting that according to a recent Eurobarometer survey⁴, 42% of respondents said they were aware of their rights as a citizen of the EU, but 72% said they would like to know more, representing an area of activity where the Europe for Citizens programme is clearly able to contribute.

If the programme in general shows relevance to the needs of citizens, are any of the programme's general and specific objectives more relevant than the others? In order to address this question, we can draw upon an analysis of documents, and the views of three groups - stakeholders, beneficiaries and ineligible/ unsuccessful projects⁵. While all of the programme's defined objectives were felt to be of at least some relevance to citizens, there are some clear patterns in the relative importance ascribed to individual objectives. For the general

¹ OJEU 2007/C 303/01 <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2007:303:0001:0016:EN:PDF>

² OJEU 2007/C 306/01 <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/JOHtml.do?uri=OJ:C:2007:306:SOM:en:HTML>

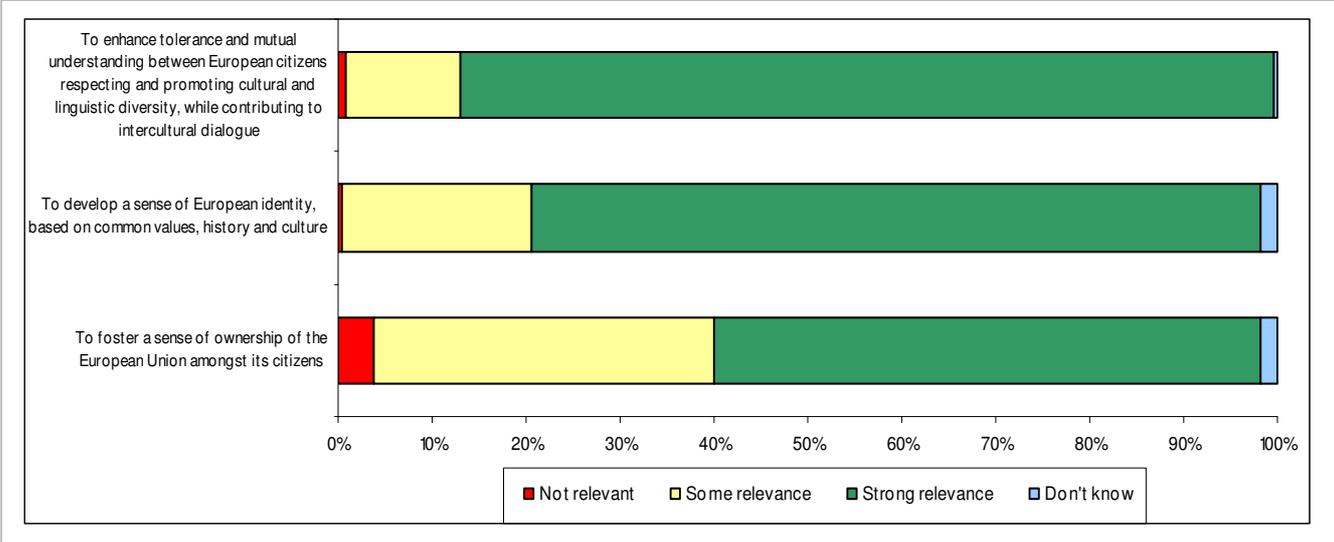
³ http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/secretariat_general/citizens_initiative/index_en.htm [accessed on 26/10/10]

⁴ Eurobarometer 73 (August 2010)

⁵ The data from these groups was gathered in different ways – see section 3.5

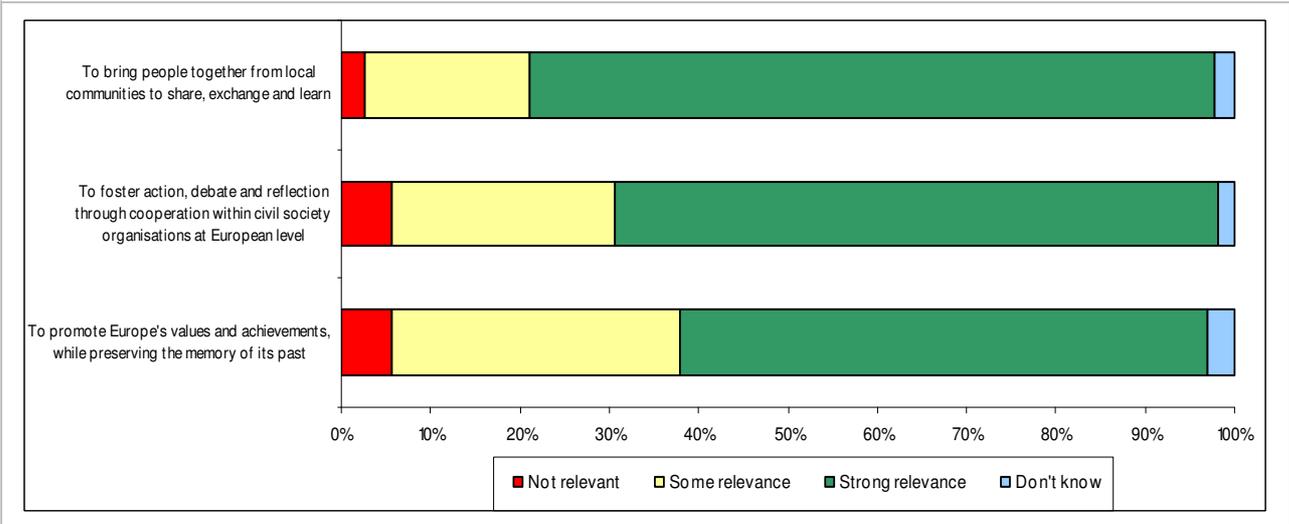
objectives, all three groups of respondents felt that enhancing tolerance and mutual understanding was of strongest relevance, followed by developing a sense of European identity. The objective of fostering a sense of ownership of the European Union amongst its citizens was rated less relevant by those consulted. The specific objectives follow a similar pattern, with bringing people from local communities together to share, exchange and learn, and fostering action, debate and reflection through cooperation within civil society, was felt to be of stronger relevance than promoting Europe's values and achievements. These patterns are reflected in the figures from beneficiaries where the sample is large enough to present a quantitative picture, as shown in Figures 4.1 and 4.2. As the graph shows, whilst all objectives are seen as being of strong relevance, the objectives of EU ownership and European values are least likely to be ranked in this way.

Figure 4.1 How relevant are the following *general objectives* of the Europe for Citizens Programme to the needs of the citizens that your organisation deals with?



Base: All respondents to beneficiary survey (232)

Figure 4.2 Q23 - How relevant are the following *specific objectives* of the Europe for Citizens Programme to the needs of the citizens that your organisation deals with?



Base: All respondents to beneficiary survey (232)

There are some variations in the patterns of responses, particularly by stakeholder group and projects' action lines, although these differences are only apparent for specific rather than general objectives. This is perhaps to be expected, since the general objectives may be seen as broader, longer-term aspirations, while the specific objectives correspond more to the means or methods by which they should be achieved. It is apparent that beneficiaries under Action 2 – Active Civil Society for Europe, were more likely to state that fostering action, debate and reflection through cooperation within civil society is of strongest relevance, while beneficiaries under Action 4 – Active European Remembrance felt that promoting Europe's values and achievements [while preserving the memory of its past] was of most relevance.

In summary, although all objectives are phrased in a general way and all are of at least some relevance to stakeholders, beneficiaries (and unsuccessful applicants), this analysis highlights the value placed upon fostering connections between citizens and with civil society and their ability to learn with and from each other. Stakeholders and beneficiaries place less emphasis on promoting identification with, understanding or appreciation of the European Union, but this is always likely to be a longer-term, more indirect effect of participation, as highlighted in figure 3.2 above.

4.1.1 Relevance of permanent priorities

EQ2: To what extent are the permanent priorities of the programme and their annual focus relevant to the achievement of its general and specific objectives?

The process of selecting projects and organisations for support gives precedence to a number of permanent priorities¹. These 'are of particular relevance for the development of an active European citizenship' and are designed to 'encourage synergies between projects working on the same issue' and to increase the visibility of supported activities². As part of their application, projects are invited to address one or more theme, although the programme remains open to innovative, bottom-up projects outside of the themes. There are five permanent themes

- Future of the European Union and its basic values
- Active European Citizenship: participation and democracy in Europe
- Inter-cultural dialogue
- Impact of EU policies in societies
- People's wellbeing in Europe: employment, social cohesion and sustainable development

Along with these permanent themes, annual priorities are set 'in order to be able to react to new or very specific topics arising on the European agenda'. The priorities for 2007 and 2008 are shown in Table 4.1, along with the numbers of projects which selected them.

¹ The programme also operates a set of 'horizontal features such as volunteering, transnational working, cultural and linguistic diversity, but no data is available in respect of these.

² Programme Guide, p6, version valid as of 1 January 2009

Table 4.1 Numbers of selected projects by annual priority, 2007 and 2008

Annual Priorities	2007	2008
Promoting inter-cultural dialogue	718	926
Developing Active European Citizenship: participation and democracy	397	458
Equal opportunities	250	261
Social cohesion	225	246
Sustainable development	196	n/a
Shaping the future of the European Union	195	204
Understanding the impact of EU policies	184	n/a
Employment	177	235
50 Years of the Treaty of Rome	133	n/a
Enlargement	122	n/a
European values	73	n/a
European integration	55	n/a

Source: EACEA analysis of applications and DG COMM annual reports¹.

In order to assess the relevance of the permanent themes and annual priorities, we can make a logical analysis of their degree of fit with the programme's objectives and combine this with analysis of the prevalence of the priorities amongst projects and of participants' and stakeholders' views on their relevance.

Beginning with the logical fit of the themes, it is clear that all five are closely tied in to the programme objectives. Interestingly, in simple numerical terms, the 'weight' of the permanent themes is somewhat different to that within the general and specific objectives (see Figure 3.1) since three have a strong logical relationship to the objective of fostering a sense of ownership of the EU, i.e. the future of the European Union and its basic values, the impact of EU policies in societies, and people's wellbeing. The other two permanent themes, active European Citizenship and inter-cultural dialogue, are tied more closely to the other general and specific objectives which are related to citizens developing their understanding of other cultures and a shared sense of European identity. Insofar, as the themes are strongly related to the objectives, they appear to be highly relevant.

Turning to how the themes are reflected in the actual make-up of projects within the programme, however, a more sophisticated picture emerges. From Table 4.1 it is clear that many more projects associate themselves with the two themes which are related to citizenship and inter-cultural dialogue than those related to understanding the EU as a set of institutions and policies. In this sense, the weight of the priorities has not been reflected in the projects coming forward, and we might conclude that projects regard the themes of citizenship and inter-cultural dialogue as more relevant to their needs. This finding is evidently in accord with the relative relevance accorded to the programme objectives noted above, and also concurs with what respondents told us in the surveys about the relevance of the themes to citizens. This might reflect the fact that the EU-related themes are, in a sense, more top-down than the others, being concerned with demonstrating to people the role

¹ Data provided for 2009 was identical to 2008 and needs to be verified. Data cannot be displayed as a percentage of activities as is unclear whether this is taken from a complete sample of supported activities or only project applications.

of the EU in shaping economic and social life and the environment, although clearly also encouraging them to shape its future. In contrast, the citizenship and inter-cultural dialogue themes are more clearly bottom-up in nature. It is perhaps not surprising if these therefore prove more popular.

Another noteworthy feature of Table 4.1 is the very low number of projects identifying 'European values' as a theme. Given the close connection between European values and the overall goal of developing a sense of European identity, this is perhaps surprising. It is not clear why this might be so. European values are clearly defined within the Programme Guide in terms of freedom, democracy and respect for human rights, cultural diversity, tolerance and solidarity, with specific attention paid to the fight against racism, xenophobia and intolerance. In this sense, European values would underpin many projects.

Whilst in general the themes are relevant to the objective, their role is perhaps more open to question. Although the permanent themes are helpful in clarifying the programme objectives, we found no evidence that they helped to create synergies between projects or raised visibility. In relation to the annual priorities, it is hard to argue that those set down for 2007 and 2008 focused attention on 'new or very specific topics', with the exception of 'enlargement' and '50 years of the Treaty of Rome.' In this context, it is perhaps not surprising that when asked for comments on the priorities, a highly varied set of comments was received, some of which showed a lack of understanding of their role.

4.2 Programme coherence

4.2.1 External coherence

EQ3: To what extent has the programme proved complementary to other Community programmes - in the field of education, youth and culture and assessment of the complementary potential of the European Year of Volunteering 2011

EQ4: To what extent has the programme proved complementary to other Community initiatives? Dialogue with citizens, citizens' participation and rights, managed by DGs Communication, Information Society and Justice and Home Affairs

The evaluation has found no evidence of any contradiction between the aims and objectives of Europe for Citizens and other Community programmes or initiatives. The review of policy materials and consultations highlighted a number of areas where objectives, methods or target groups overlap, namely:

- The Fundamental Rights and Citizenship Programme managed by DG Justice. This seeks to promote the development of a European society based on respect for the rights derived from citizenship of the Union, to strengthen civil society and to encourage an open, transparent and regular dialogue with it. It also seeks to fight racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism, especially through cross-community approaches
- PROGRESS, the EU's employment and social solidarity programme administered by DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. This also seeks to develop effective partnerships between the EU and stakeholders (including social partners and civil society), promoting public engagement and

understanding among citizens of the problems facing Europe. In common with Europe for Citizens the programme funds EU networks of NGOs in order to combat social exclusion and discrimination

- Youth in Action programme and volunteering programmes (including Grundtvig pilot action on senior volunteers) managed by DG Education and Culture. Europe for Citizens places major emphasis on the engagement of young people, while volunteering clearly contributes to active citizenship and the development of mutual trust and solidarity with others
- DG Communication Plan D (now Debate Europe) and European Citizens Panels
- DG INFSO pilot study on e-democracy and e-participation

This apparent duplication is not surprising and potentially very beneficial in terms of achieving synergy effects. At the same time there are a number of types of activity which are unique to Europe for Citizens, such as remembrance and town twinning. The extent to which Europe for Citizens has served to complement the work of other programmes and policies is however less easy to assess. Responses from the stakeholder survey reinforce the view that the programme complements Community programmes in the areas of promoting inter-cultural dialogue, developing participation and democracy in Europe, the European Year of Volunteering 2011, youth policies or the Youth in Action programme as well as education, training and lifelong learning. Many respondents either do not know or do not believe that the programme complements either sports programmes or multilingualism and language learning, although a number suggest that it could or should do more to contribute to these policy areas.

There is arguably also scope for boosting the linkages between Europe for Citizens and other Community programmes and initiatives. Stakeholders suggested that the programme's links with a number of policy areas could or should be strengthened. The most frequently mentioned were the Lisbon Agenda (or Europe 2020) , foreign policy, third countries and enlargement, the Culture Programme, Youth in Action Programme, migration and integration policies, social inclusion policies, sport programmes and local government capacity building.

Responses to the stakeholder survey contained very few identifiable patterns on suggested ways in which this could be achieved. There were some comments relating to the potential of twinning to support lifelong learning or local government capacity building. Another commented that there was scope to work more with cultural organisations as they often share the same goals as citizenship projects, while using different techniques or forms of expression.

The Europe for Citizens programme can also play an important role in supporting the “European Year of voluntary activities promoting active citizenship” in 2011 (and vice versa). Volunteering is one of the key ways in which citizens can participate in their communities and civil society, and provides an opportunity for participants to address human, environmental and social needs or concerns. The various surveys conducted in the course of this evaluation provide qualitative information on the role of volunteers in supported activities and how supported organisations work to promote volunteering. To ensure the achievement of synergy effects, the promotion and use of volunteering should certainly be incorporated in selection criteria during 2011, and information on the number of projects under Europe for Citizens dealing with this topic should be assembled. There should also be scope for involving organisations (and their networks) funded under Europe for Citizens in European and national level awareness and information exchange activities taking place during the year.

Case study: Network of Culture (CultNet), Action 1, Measure 2- Networks of Twinned Towns

This project provides an example of the way activities supported under Europe for Citizens can support cultural and economic objectives. CultNet connected six cities from four European countries: Varaždin (Croatia), Ptuj (Slovenia), Zalaegerszeg (Hungary), Trnava (Slovakia), Banská Štiavnica (Slovakia) and Burghausen (Germany). Led by the Municipality of Varaždin in Croatia, Cultnet aimed to create a transnational network of municipalities with similar historical, geographic, cultural and economical experiences in the field of culture and cultural tourism; with a view to establishing closer ties. The project consisted of forums, workshops or conferences organized during three annual events in Varaždin and Ptuj between September 2009 and July 2010. Existing cultural events were used as the basis for activity and target groups were defined as local cultural operators and civil society organizations, providing opportunities for dialogue and establishing a platform for future cooperation. One tangible result of efforts to build capacity has been the organisation of local film festivals in the Slovakian and Hungarian partner municipalities.

4.2.2 Contribution to wider EU priorities

EQ7: To what extent can the programme be said to contribute to the achievement of the strategic objectives of the policy area (e.g. the Lisbon Strategy)?

It would appear that Europe for Citizens occupies a unique position at the nexus of three key policy areas:

- Justice, freedom and security –in terms of fundamental rights
- Employment and social policy - for anti-discrimination and relations with civil society
- Education, training and youth – especially youth participation and voluntary activity

The nature of the programme and the types of projects and organisations supported would suggest that it makes at least an indirect contribution to aspects of all three policy areas, a finding that is supported by the information included in table 4.2 above. Supported projects and organisations are able to cover subjects under any of the policy areas listed above and many of them do in practice.

It may be relevant to focus on the question of how - or in what ways - the Europe for Citizens Programme could contribute more strongly to the achievement of the EU's wider strategic goals in future. There is a potential role for Europe for Citizens in terms of helping to engage citizens in the formulation of new policies and strategies such as Europe 2020. Initial consultations with Commission staff also highlighted the potential contribution of Europe for Citizens in linking with or supporting the new European Citizens Initiative, most likely through organisational support grants for civil society organisations.

Case study: Collaboration with the Lisbon Council on Europe 2020, Action 2, Measure 1 - Structural support for European policy research organisations

In the autumn/winter of 2009, the Lisbon Council ("The Lisbon Council for Economic Competitiveness and Social Renewal") was asked by the European Commission to collaborate on a series of events launching and discussing the new Europe 2020 Strategy. As the Lisbon Council receives a multi-annual operating grant supporting their work as a think tank and policy network they were able to use their contacts to help identify a range of organisations able to host events. As a result, seven events were held across Europe between February and July 2010). The chosen partners included think tanks, academic institutions, NGOs and regional governments with direct, practical experience of the modernisation and innovation agenda, knowledge of their own national or regional context as well as contact with citizens. By activating their own networks they were able to reach people with knowledge of and interest in this policy area, linking support for policy research organisations to high-profile events and the EU's strategic priorities, through the use of intermediary organisations and networks.

4.2.3 Policy linkages

EQ5: What are the links of the programme to policy initiatives and political priorities at national and European Level?

A definitive answer to this question would require a comprehensive review of national policy initiatives in the area of active citizenship and civic participation – a task beyond the scope of this evaluation. The balance of responses to the stakeholder survey indicates that links between the programme and policy initiatives or priorities at national and European level are limited, and the consultations and stakeholder interviews did not generate any mention of a specific policy initiative at national level that is linked to Europe for Citizens. Indeed, specific countries were named in responses only where stakeholders highlighted the absence of a link to national policy. At the same time, they did not identify any areas where Europe for Citizens appears to contradict other policies or political priorities.

Member States are linked to Europe for Citizens at the strategic level through the Programme Committee, which serves to build consensus and share information among national partners, predominantly, but not exclusively, the national ministries responsible for culture. However, the fact that responsibility for citizenship policy resides with a variety of functional departments and that many other national ministries have an influence on the topic means that linkages to other policy areas and programmes are also likely to be highly varied, and may also account for the lack of connectivity to national policies on citizenship. The following section on community added value addresses this issue by looking at the programme's perceived or likely impact on policies and processes. A further link to national policy and practice stems from the support for policy research and civil society organisations, which although active on a European level maintain strong links to the policy and practice in their home countries.

4.3 Community added value

EQ6: What is the Community added value of the programme?

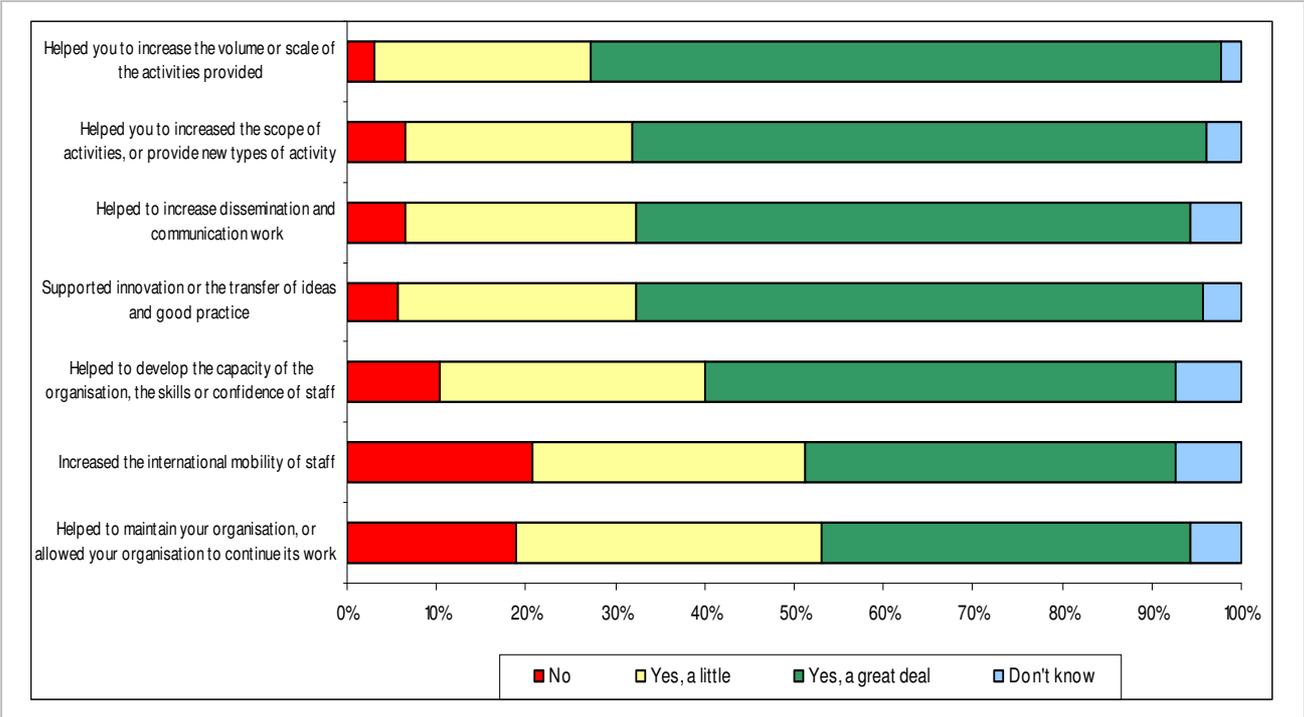
The approach to assessing community added value is based on a typology of the potential impact of European-level intervention and funding in this area. The typology is based on the approach employed in the interim evaluation of the Culture Programme¹ and informed by guidelines set out by DG Employment². The information is sourced from the results of beneficiary, unsuccessful project and stakeholder surveys.

The beneficiary survey sought to explore impact at project level, and this information is reproduced in figure 4.3 below. This shows that while all statements received broadly positive responses, most projects believed that support had had greatest impact on the scale or scope of activities; it had also helped them to develop innovation, knowledge sharing, and dissemination activity. The same pattern of results was evident across all action lines, although projects under Action 4 – Active European Remembrance placed slightly more emphasis on the impact of funding on dissemination and communication activity. This is likely to reflect the numbers of Remembrance projects involved in production or realisation initiatives. As the evaluation includes a survey of ineligible/ unsuccessful projects we were also able to ask respondents what impact the failure to secure funding had had on their organisation. They mentioned the same factors as beneficiaries, but placed more emphasis on the international aspect of their work, saying that they had had to reduce the number of international projects or the amount of international travel as a direct consequence.

¹ ECOTEC Research and Consulting (2010) Interim Evaluation of Culture Programme for DG Education and Culture of the European Commission

² DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities - Possible aspects of 'Community Added Value' for Employment and Social Policy, Brussels 29/11/08

Figure 4.3 Q7 - How has participation in the Europe for Citizens programme influenced your organisation?



BASE: All respondents to beneficiary survey (232)

It is also possible to scale up these responses to gain a view on the total number of organisations benefitting in these areas. Table 4.2 combines responses from the beneficiary survey with programme data, weighted by measure to reflect the composition of the programme. This suggests that between 2007 and 2009 over 3,500 organisations have increased the volume of scale of their activities, with only slightly fewer increasing the scope of activities or developing innovation, sharing ideas and good practice.

Table 4.2 Q7 - How has participation in the Europe for Citizens programme influenced your organisation?

Statement	Yes	% Respondents	Programme total
Helped you to increase the volume or scale of the activities	220	95%	3,544
Helped you to increased the scope of activities, or provide new types of activity	208	90%	3,344
Supported innovation or the transfer of ideas and good practice	209	90%	3,343
Helped to increase dissemination and communication work	204	88%	3,099
Helped to develop the capacity of the organisation, the skills or confidence of staff	191	82%	3,057
Helped to maintain your organisation, or allowed your organisation to continue its work	175	75%	2,778
Increased the international mobility of staff	167	72%	2,645

BASE: All respondents to beneficiary survey (232). Programme total is weighted by measure to reflect programme composition

Stakeholders were asked a broader range of questions dealing with added value in terms of symbolism, policy and process. Although based on a much smaller sample, results are fairly consistent with the beneficiary survey, with the strongest impact at organisational level in terms of capacity, mobility, innovation, volume and scope of activities. Results also suggest a positive impact in terms of the symbolic value of EU involvement and the programme's impact on dissemination. Stakeholders were less likely to believe that the programme promotes more coherent policies or supports institutional and process improvements, though the responses varied across the four groups of stakeholder. Although sample sizes are comparatively small, civil society organisations (CSO) and Europe for Citizens Points (PEC) were more likely to agree that the programme creates a great deal of added value, which might be anticipated since for civil society organisations the programme builds capacity whilst the PEC have an overview of activities in their countries. Both groups cite the creation of added value through the international dimension of activities, civil society organisations also mention the symbolic value of EU involvement and impact on policy development, while PECs are more likely to cite the programme's impact on the volume, innovative content and scope of activities.

In summary, although direct impacts on the scale and scope of activities are clear, the added value of EU involvement is perhaps greatest in terms of the symbolic support for civil society partners and developing the international dimension of activities. Combined with support for communication and dissemination activities and the EU's influence on sector capacity and networks, this creates structures that will have an impact on policy into the future.

5.0 Efficiency

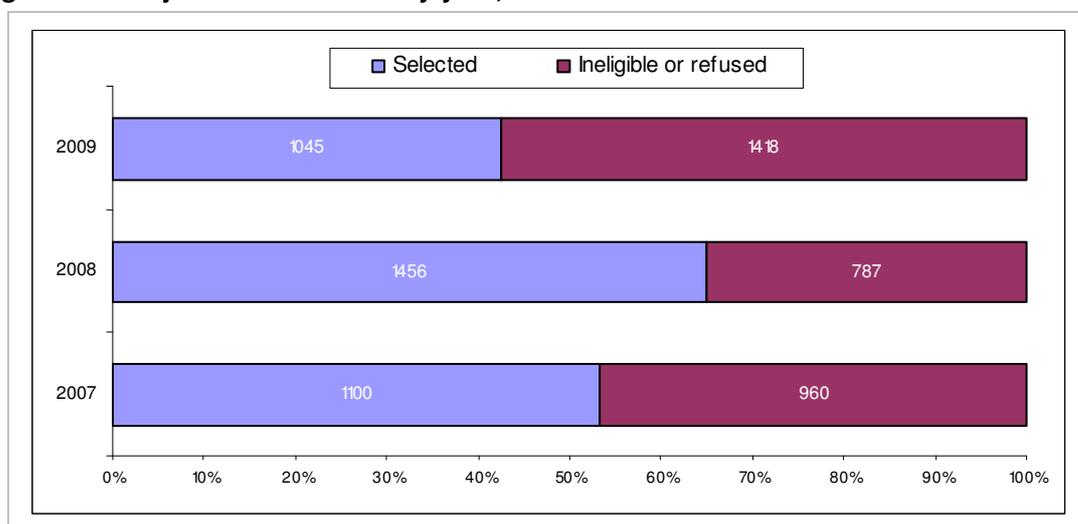
5.1 Programme inputs

EQ16: Is the size of budget for the programme appropriate and proportional to what the programme is set out to achieve? Is it sufficient for reaching a critical mass of impacts? Could the same results have been achieved with less funding? Could the use of other policy instruments or mechanisms have provided better cost-effectiveness?

5.1.1 Appropriateness of the budget

In order to assess the appropriateness of the budget, we can draw on both the perspectives of those involved in the programme and data relating to applications. The latter data provide an indication of what we might term 'expressed demand'. Information provided by EACEA shows that over time the number of applications has risen quite significantly, from 2,060 in 2007 to 2,243 in 2008 and 2,463 in 2009, providing evidence that demand for the programme remains strong and appears to have been successful in reaching a wider and wider audience. In terms of the question of the appropriateness and proportionality of the budget, some inferences can be drawn from the numbers of projects supported. In this respect, Figure 5.1 shows that whilst the approval rate rose in 2008 it dropped back again in 2009, which suggests that the programme has not, from the funds available, been able to respond to an increase in applications of the order of 20% in three years¹. This would suggest that the budget is some way below levels of demand.

Figure 5.1 Project success rates by year, 2007 to 2009



Source: EACEA analysis of applications for 2007 and 2008, plus project lists for 2009. Only includes project activity, not support grants

Findings from the stakeholder survey lend weight to this view: many respondents feel that the resources allocated to the programme are inadequate for reaching its goals, with twice as many believing resources to be

¹ This might also, of course, be due to a fall in the quality of applications, but the scale of the change makes this unlikely.

inadequate than those that believe resources are adequate. Most of the positive responses to this question came from the Europe for Citizens Points, with other types of stakeholder having a less positive interpretation. This difference probably reflects the different positions of stakeholders and PECs with respect to the programme. PECs might be responding to this question from the point of view of the resources available for projects to execute activities on the ground, whereas other stakeholders may be taking a more global approach. Indeed, we found that while a number of respondents expressed the view that individual grants were large enough, several stakeholders commented that the programme's objectives are very ambitious in relation to the levels of funding allocated, and that the programme is less-well funded than many other European programmes, many of which are less likely to have a significant impact on individual citizens. Unlike many other programmes, e.g. the Lifelong Learning programme and the Culture programme, Europe for Citizens is much less context-specific, i.e. it is applicable to all citizens in virtually any context, rather than school pupils, trainees or people attending cultural events. In this sense, it might be said to be a 'mass' programme, and therefore resourcing issues should be judged in this context. In this respect, there is a strong case for arguing that the programme is indeed under-resourced.

The evaluation of the precursor programme also touched on this issue, finding that although the remit of the programme was challenging and wide, in comparison to other programmes the resources available were limited. This contributed to recommendations that the total budget be increased, or the remit of the programme be narrowed¹. Although the total budget has increased from €72m for a three year programme to €215m over seven years (or from €24m to nearly €31m on average per year) the programme now also supports a broader range of activities and the objectives are still extremely ambitious and challenging.

The programme is clearly able to make an impact in terms of its global aim of 'giving citizens the opportunity to interact and participate in constructing an ever-closer Europe....', but assessing whether the resources allocated enable the programme to meet some of its general objectives such as to 'develop a sense of European identity' and 'foster a sense of ownership of the EU amongst citizens' is more problematic. This may be an issue of the way in which these objectives are formulated, not just because they are ambitious and challenging, but also because there are a range of other factors likely to have an impact on their achievement. This includes not only national policies and initiatives that affect European citizenship and integration, but also the vast amounts of media coverage on these issues. By the same token, the programme is not expected to achieve these impacts through only directly-funded activities, or in isolation, but additionally by supporting a range of intermediaries, multipliers and other partners able to contribute to the achievement of these objectives.

In relation to the issue of cost-effectiveness, we need to take into account a number of factors. First, it is clear that the outcomes intended by the programme range from the concrete and sustainable (such as the production of guidance for towns involved in twinning in Croatia) to the far less tangible and less sustainable which brings groups of citizens together for dialogue and debate but which then cease when the funding runs out (although as we show in section 6.3.2 there appears to be a significant potential multiplier effect from such activities in which changes in attitude are translated into proactive intentions to take part in further activities.) Secondly, projects also vary in scale. Although the programme might be 'mass' in intention (as just discussed) individual projects are frequently small in scale, involving tens or hundreds of participants rather than thousands. As will

¹ ECOTEC (2006) Ex-post evaluation of the Community Action Programme to promote active European citizenship for DG Education and Culture of the European Commission

be demonstrated elsewhere in this report, the programme has been successful in encouraging a huge diversity in subject matter and enabling a large range of different types of organisations to participate – from the small and local to the larger national associations. In strict cost-effectiveness terms, this might mean that ensuring broad access and participation comes at a 'cost' to the extent that a proportion of activities will be dissipated and not sustained, with little in the way of an effect which is both broad and cumulative at national or European levels, and little claim to achieving a 'critical mass'; this is a 'cost' as arguably a focus on more concrete outcomes would mean more outputs could be bought for the same input. However, this would clearly run counter to the 'bottom-up' nature of the programme.

In this context, then, the best way to consider cost-effectiveness is in terms of balance within the programme between those actions which reach out to small scale operators and newcomers and those which support capacity building. On this basis, there is a case for concluding that the current programme strikes a good balance and achieves good cost-effectiveness. At the same time, there is also an argument that in the current period of resource constraint, the programme could be developed to a further stage in which capacity building and the use of multipliers is given greater prominence across all activities, not least because of the additional funding levered in via such a focus. However, this is a political choice rather than something that can be 'scientifically' determined.

5.1.2 Organisational Model

EQ16: To what extent do the management organisational model and the different management responsibilities (Commission, Executive Agency) contribute to the implementation of the programme?

The Europe for Citizens Programme is managed centrally, at European level, with responsibilities split between the European Commission, and the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). The European Commission is responsible for the strategic management of the programme, including managing the budget, setting priorities and targets, guiding and monitoring implementation, as well as supervising evaluation. EACEA is responsible for the implementation of most of the actions of the Europe for Citizens Programme including the Europe for Citizens Points. The exception is Action 3 "High visibility events" which is managed directly by the European Commission. EACEA is responsible for the ongoing management of projects and supported organisations, including the application process, evaluation of bids, monitoring, financial management and reporting of results.

The current model reflects the findings of recent evaluations, including the Impact Assessment for the current programme¹, recommending that the programme be managed centrally in order to safeguard its European dimensions, in line with the principle of subsidiarity. The Executive Agency is entirely dedicated to the management of programmes and was designed to have the capacity to deal with the administrative requirements of a large programme like Europe for Citizens. The consultations suggest that this organisational model represents a significant improvement on the precursor programme, particularly in terms of efficiency (although it is much more difficult to make an assessment of the value for money implications). There is some evidence from beneficiary and stakeholder interviews that the Executive Agency is efficiently administering the

¹ European Commission (2005) New programme for the period 2007-2013 to promote active European Citizenship: Impact Assessment. COM (2005) 116 Final

programme, making significant procedural improvements around finance, eligibility criteria, harmonisation of processes and the development of e-forms for applications.

As part of the evaluation, stakeholders were also asked for their views on the division of responsibilities, and there were more positive than negative responses to this question. The prevailing view appears to be that the main benefits were felt to be around the separation between policy development and administration, (one stated this was a "role model for other DGs"), as well as the increased possibility for achieving synergy effects with other programmes managed by the Executive Agency and improved efficiency in terms of the handling of applications and questions. The only potentially negative aspects indicated by the stakeholder consultations were a small number of comments around difficulties in understanding who the beneficiaries are finally accountable to and the quality of media or communications materials and insufficient levels of contact between Executive Agency and stakeholders.

In summary, it is unlikely that major changes in programme implementation are required. We would not recommend either a centralised model with a greater role for the European Commission or a decentralised model administered by Member States, given the subject matter and transnational nature of many projects.

5.1.3 Administrative requirements

EQ21: Are the actions sufficiently simple (in terms of administration), sufficiently funded, and sufficiently communicated?

The first part of this question requires us to assess whether the administrative requirements of the programme cause problems to actual and potential beneficiaries, serving to limit access to the programme, and therefore its reach or effectiveness. Although around three-quarters of all respondents to the beneficiary survey state that financial controls, project monitoring and administrative requirements were simple and reasonable, deeper analysis of the results suggests strongly that those receiving funding for the first time are significantly less likely to have found the administrative requirements to be simple and reasonable, suggesting that previous experience of managing European programmes helps. A number of specific comments were also received, relating to the need for consistency in guidelines and simplified or standardised forms, the provision of materials (in different languages) well in advance of deadlines and that more qualitative feedback should be provided on applications. Further analysis of the results by host country suggests that - contrary to expectations - there is no significant difference between the views of beneficiaries in so called 'old' Member States and those acceding since 2004.

While there were some comments in the stakeholder survey (from PECs) stating that the application process has served to deter potential bidders due to the amount of work involved in applying or problems with e-forms, it is not clear whether this is more or less of an issue than it is for comparable programmes. While we do not have access to the views of any organisations that may have been deterred from applying, we can compare the views of beneficiaries with those whose bids were unsuccessful. Many of the unsuccessful bidders interviewed were complimentary about the fact that bids can be submitted electronically or by email, but several criticised the application forms, specifically their complexity, structure, size of text boxes or availability in different languages. Others were disappointed with the quality or the lack of guidance and support, or the quality or timeliness of feedback. However, overall, unsuccessful bidders were no more or less likely to criticise the

application process than beneficiaries, which suggests that it is not a major factor at the point at which individuals and organisations decide to make an application.

Although there is no evidence that the programme's administrative requirements are more onerous than those of other EU programmes, the consultations and the survey highlighted a view that the skills and experience of key staff in applicant organisations is a crucial factor in the success of bids, especially for smaller organisations. The more in-depth consultations and stakeholder interviews also touched on the structure of the programme and its selection criteria, especially a perception that more weight is placed on the numbers of programme objectives, permanent priorities and horizontal themes that activity supports (in addition to the involvement of new Member States and existence of dissemination plans) than on a qualitative assessment of how the proposed activity will support achievement of programme objectives.

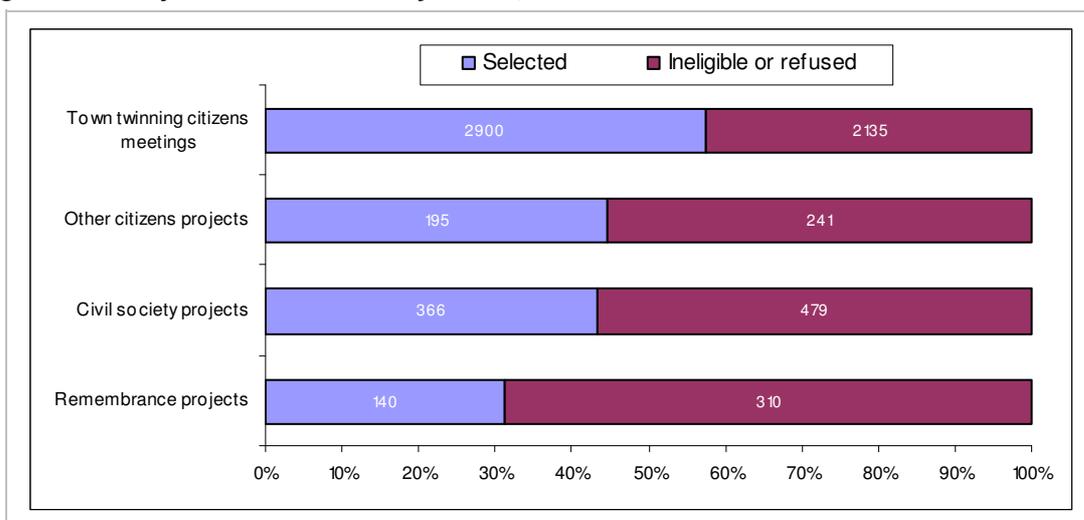
Overall, therefore, administration seems satisfactory, there is no clear evidence of a major deterrent effect for applicants or significant numbers of good projects going unfunded. There is some evidence that stakeholders and beneficiaries feel that there may be scope for further rationalisation or simplification of application forms. The possibility of servicing applications in more (than the three working) languages could also be investigated.

5.1.4 Funding allocations

As highlighted in section 2.3, the European Parliament set guidelines on how the programme budget should be allocated to each of the four action lines. It is important therefore to understand whether there is a mismatch between these proportions and the levels of demand in each area, and whether adjusting these proportions would be likely to have an impact on the programme's results.

Stakeholders were asked whether they felt there was a significant level of latent demand for each of the main types of activity supported under Europe for Citizens (with town twinning separated from rest of Action 1 – Active Citizens for Europe as it forms the bulk of activity under this action). The responses to this question were inconclusive, with stakeholders tending to state that there was a great deal of latent demand for their particular area of interest. To further develop understanding of the levels of demand for individual actions, this information can be contrasted with an analysis of the project approval rates. Figure 5.2 uses application data provided by EACEA for projects (i.e. without organisational/ structural support grants) in order to show success rates for the main actions – with town twinning citizens meetings separated from the other measures under Action 1 as they provide the bulk of applications.

Figure 5.2 Project success rates by action, 2007 to 2009



Source: EACEA analysis of applications for 2007 and 2008, plus lists of applications received for 2009¹.

This shows that a relatively high proportion of applications are ineligible or unsuccessful across the four Action lines, but this is especially true for remembrance projects (Action 4) with citizens meetings having the highest approval rate. As we do not have a complete sample of applications received in 2007 and 2008, we cannot produce this analysis for all actions and measures.

The fact that so many applications under 4 – Active European Remembrance could not be supported suggests that there may be a significant level of unfulfilled demand for projects in this area, which appears to be reinforced by a further breakdown of these bids. Of the 205 bids submitted in 2009, only 11 were deemed ineligible. However, the survey of unsuccessful bidders included 13 under Action 4, and although they were given a range of reasons on why their project could not be supported, only a very small number were told that their projects were rejected because their bids weren't competitive or there wasn't enough money (other responses include undefined target groups, insufficient international dimensions, or budgets not set out in detail). Therefore the most likely explanation for high rejection rates for these measures lies in a combination of high demand for these types of project and bids that are of lower quality than for the more established measures such as town twinning citizens meetings. The fact that town twinning bids also have access to support from the network of twinning representatives co-ordinated by the Council of European Municipalities and Regions is also likely to play a role here.

This picture can be compared to another of the newer types of activity, Measure 1.6 – Mobility measures. This received 93 bids in its first funding call in 2009, with 9 approved, only 11 deemed ineligible and 73 rejected. This equates to a very low approval rate of 9.7% of applications, with €1.2m awarded to these projects from a total of €11m requested. This would suggest that there is particularly high demand for these types of projects, so it would worth increasing the funding allocated to this measure if there is a similar call for proposals in future.

Analysis of funding bids received in 2009 shows that there is also extremely high demand for structural support to think tanks and civil society organisations (Action 2, Measures 1 and 2). There were 111 applications for an

¹ Note: As we do not have access to a complete sample of successful and unsuccessful bids from 2007 and 2008, this information cannot be provided for all actions and measures

annual support grant in 2009, with 18 approved, 15 ineligible and 78 rejected, equating to a success rate of only 16%. This pattern is not replicated for support measures under Action 1 – Active Citizens for Europe (measure 2.2) which had a success rate of 58% in 2009.

These variations in the level of demand for individual measures suggest that a greater degree of flexibility in the way that funds are allocated across the programme may be of value. Although the legal base set out indicative proportions of the total budget to be allocated to each of the four Action lines, there is a strong argument for reducing the amounts of funding for areas where there is much weaker evidence of demand. This is certainly true for Action 1 – Active Citizens for Europe (with the exception of new measures such as 1.6 – Mobility measures) and Action 3 – Together for Europe. It would also be worthwhile exploring ways of increasing the allocations for Action 4 – Active European Remembrance and Action 2 – Active Civil Society, especially in relation to structural support grants for civil society and policy research organisations (Measures 1 and 2).

5.1.5 Size of grants

The amounts of funding available for projects under Europe for Citizens are subject to lower and upper limits, as shown in table 5.1 below.

Table 5.1 Minimum and maximum grants, 2010

Measure	Minimum grant	Maximum grant
1.1.1 Town twinning	2,500 €	22,000 € ¹
1.1.2 Twinning networks	10,000 €	150,000 €
1.1.6 Mobility measures	75,000 €	150,000 €
1.2.1 Citizens projects	100,000 €	250,000 €
1.2.2 Support measures	30,000 €	100,000 €
2.3 Civil society projects	10,000 €	55,000 €
4 Remembrance projects	10,000 €	55,000 €

Source: Europe for Citizens Programme Guide 2010

The rationale for these current limits is not clear, with consultations suggesting that they have been set at levels where they will include the majority of funding requests (or at a level able to remove major outliers in the amount of funding requested). It should also be noted here that the upper ceiling for civil society projects is scheduled to increase to €150,000 from 2011 onwards. The question here is whether the different amounts of available funding influence effectiveness and in what way, and if changing the maximum level of funding would have an impact on the programme. In the main, stakeholders stated that they were satisfied with the size of individual grants - although of course larger grants would enable them to further develop their activities in a number of areas. The beneficiary survey asked respondents for their assessment of the likely impact of larger grants, and Table 5.2 illustrates the most frequent responses.

¹ A maximum of €40,000 per project can apply if at least 10 towns participate in the project

Table 5.2 Q30 - If larger grants were available would your organisation be likely to change the types of activities it offers?

Likely impact of increasing grant sizes	Responses	% Reponses
Would lead to larger events, more participants	33	14%
Would encourage more ambitious, better quality or more innovative projects	22	9%
Activities would have greater scope, variety, themes	20	9%
Would involve more countries, greater geographical coverage	16	7%
Would support longer or permanent activities	15	6%
Would involve broader social groups (young people, more deprived etc)	13	6%
Would promote better communication, dissemination, research	11	5%
Would improve capacity, training, facilities	10	4%
Would support more or more frequent events	4	2%
Would involve professionals in activities	4	2%
Would increase networking, exchanges	2	1%
Would create efficiencies	2	1%
Would be able to subsidise events for participants	2	1%

Base: Telephone survey of beneficiaries, 232 respondents. Responses coded into categories

Most beneficiaries did not provide a response this question, which suggests that larger grants are not a key concern for the organisations involved, perhaps because of capacity issues. However, from those that did answer, we can see that larger grants would be likely to encourage projects that are larger, more ambitious, broader in content, coverage and reach but also take place over a longer time-period. At the same time others felt it was important to maintain the availability of smaller amounts, so that smaller organisations (e.g. smaller municipalities) can still take part, potentially contributing to greater geographical coverage and reach. There may therefore be an argument for increasing maximum limits in some areas, but it appears that there is a trade-off between encouraging the development of quality, high impact events and large numbers of participants. It will be useful to compare this finding with subsequent sections on the impact of different types of activity.

The question is whether the programme should seek to increase the total level of participation or to increase the quality, innovative content or length of supported activities and therefore the impact on participants and organisations. Larger grants will not necessarily be the best way of increasing levels of participation, as programme data shows that the small town twinning grants provide around 85% of all participants. However, it appears that larger grants would help promoters to develop activities able to target specific sectors of society (often referred to as hard-to-reach) often the people under-represented in these types of activities.

Case study: Eichstetten am Kaiserstuhl, Action 1, Measure 1.1 - Town twinning citizens meetings

Eichstetten am Kaiserstuhl is a village in the Black Forest region of Germany close to the French border and the village council received a small grant in 2010 to support a series of projects and vents around the 20 year anniversary of their twinning relationship with Saint-André in the French Pyrenees. This long-term relationship has helped the two communities to develop new thematic activities together, addressing current issues of interest to rural communities such as sustainable development, biodiversity, out-migration, intergenerational contact, transport and accessibility. The coordinators have encouraged participation by focussing on activities that are not usually undertaken on traditional tourist or leisure visits, serving to update twinning activities and make them more attractive to both existing as well as new participants. Town twinning grants are one of the few forms of support available to small communities, although the skills and experience of individual staff members appears to be a more crucial determinant of success than in the case of larger organisations. Although smaller organisations have fewer financial resources and less access to additional (co-) funding, their proximity to local communities can help them to leverage voluntary input and specialist skills from residents, in this case workshops and excursions run by local experts, as well as assistance with media work.

5.1.6 Communication

In relation to whether the programme has been sufficiently communicated, we saw in section 5.1.1 that the numbers of applications has risen quite significantly in its first three years. This would suggest that information about the programme has gradually reached more and more organisations. Given that it has not been possible to respond to this increase in applications by funding a larger share of them, there is a prima facie case for concluding that, in global terms, communications is sufficient: better communication would, all things being equal, simply lead to more applications which could not be funded, though it might also drive up quality.

However, this is the global perspective, and some comments were received in the course of the consultations which suggested that the programme is not particularly well-known at national and regional levels, at least outside town twinning circles. This could mean that there are a number of potential applicants that are not aware of the programme or sufficiently informed about it.

5.1.7 Funding mechanisms

EQ17: How do the types of co-financing mechanisms used in the programme (in particular the different flat-rate systems) affect qualitative aspects of the projects supported?

The programme requires beneficiaries to secure co-financing, while EACEA use a system of flat-rates and lump-sums when calculating grants. Beneficiaries were asked for their thoughts on the positive and negative effects associated with this system of calculating grants and accounting for expenses. On balance responses were slightly more positive than negative, with positive comments encompassing a sense that co-financing arrangements are fair (including in comparison with other programmes), or that flat rates and lump sums are easier to administer, provide fixed budgets and allow for a degree of flexibility.

The negative comments related to the fact that flat-rates often do not reflect the real (and rising) costs of travel, accommodation or food, and are considered too low in certain countries. Others mentioned the requirement for organisations to pay expenses up-front (and the risks involved with this) and the time it takes to be reimbursed, as well as a lack of understanding about exactly which activities are eligible for reimbursement. Stakeholders also commented that the no-profit rule causes difficulties for organisations in terms of their payroll and prospects for growth.

There is therefore substantial evidence of these mechanisms having (positive and negative) administrative implications, but very little evidence of them having a clear qualitative impact on the work of projects. However the fact that many feel that these mechanisms serve to reduce the administrative burden means that they are likely to have a more positive than negative impact – at least indirectly - by reducing the time supported organisations need to spend on compliance.

5.1.8 Support Measures

EQ19: To what extent does the establishment of Europe for Citizens Contact Points (PECs) as well as the introduction of support measures contribute to the achievement to the results of the programme?

Europe for Citizens Points (PEC) have been gradually established since 2008 in order to provide the public with general information on the Europe for Citizens programme, provide support to national level actors and multipliers, and provide feedback on national policies, initiatives and developments in the area of civic participation to the European Commission. They currently exist in 22 of the countries participating in Europe for Citizens, with 17 receiving grants in 2008 and 2009. The PECs are a diverse group of organisations, composed of national and regional ministries, civil society organisations, NGOs and private companies¹, varying in size, capacity, skills and expertise.

EACEA have recently conducted an assessment of PECs² finding that all have managed to set up basic information systems, helpdesks, web sites, published newsletters and other materials and organised information sessions. Three have developed support databases. The total number of people reached amounts to a “few hundred” per country per year. It finds that the establishment of PECs has not served to reduce the number of information requests received by EACEA, and there is no correlation between the numbers of applications received from each Member State and the presence of a PEC. The report states that PECs are still “recently established structures” and in the process of developing their systems, knowledge and experience, and that they currently perform a more reactive than proactive role in the programme.

The beneficiary survey conducted for this evaluation asked for views of the services provided by the PECs. Less than half of all beneficiaries had accessed PEC services, with the most frequently used being information services (web sites, publications etc) followed by grant/application support and events. Projects under Action 4 – Active European Remembrance were most likely to have accessed PEC services. Although it would appear that support from a PEC would be of most potential value to an organisation that has not been in receipt of funding before, organisations that have received funding previously are more likely to have accessed PEC

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/how-to-participate/doc714_en.htm

² EACEA (2010) Note to the file on the Europe for Citizens Contact Points

services than first time recipients (the split is broadly in line with that for the beneficiary survey as a whole – with 43% receiving funding for the first time).

Nevertheless all types of PEC service were regarded as either useful or very useful by the vast majority (77% to 78%) of beneficiaries surveyed, with only very negligible differences between the three types of service. Beneficiaries under Action 2 were most likely to rate the services as useful or very useful (though based on a relatively small sample), although it is perhaps most interesting – and understandable - that first-time recipients were noticeably more likely to rate services as helpful or very helpful than organisations which had received funding on previous occasions.

We have already seen that town-twinning citizens meetings have the highest approval rate for all types of activity under Europe for Citizens, and this is likely to be connected to the fact that not only is this kind of activity long-established, but an alternative source of support exists for these projects, in the form of the network of national twinning co-ordinators managed by the Council for European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR). This in turn links to a further question around the links between PECs and the network of twinning co-ordinators, with stakeholders expressing some doubts as to whether the two types of organisation serve to complement each other, allied with a suggestion of a lack of clarity about their respective roles. However, it is worth noting that a number of joint events have taken place recently between PECs, twinning representatives and the European Commission, and these should continue to improve information flows and networking.

Taking this information together, this suggests there PECs have not so far had a major impact on programme results, but that there is significant potential for exploiting their services to a greater degree, especially in relation to first-time programme participants. The impact of PECs (both individually and as a network) should continue to be monitored as they develop their capabilities and become more established.

5.1.9 Wider engagement

EQ19: To what extent do the structured dialogue and the annual Forum contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the programme?

The structured dialogue process comprises regular meetings between the Commission and approximately 50 key European organisations actively involved in the Europe for Citizens Programme, which in turn feeds into a broader, annual event, the Europe for Citizens Forum. Discussions cover a range of issues associated with methodology, participation and the international or political context, designed to bolster the efficiency of the programme and help the Commission to better tailor it to the needs of partners. The detailed consultations carried out for the evaluation suggest that this was seen as a useful and constructive process, helping stakeholders to play a role in shaping the programme. Feedback received from the Structured Dialogue group highlights the contribution this group has made to programme implementation, especially in terms of the recent revisions to Action 1 and Action 2, and the setting of annual priorities for the programme.

Dealing with engagement in a wider sense, research for the evaluation surveyed stakeholders on whether they felt they were adequately involved in programme design and implementation. Most responses to this were positive, with stakeholders very unlikely to give a negative response. The individual comments varied greatly, with one calling for better communication between stakeholders, Europe for Citizens Points and Commission, and another for an enhanced role for the PECs in hosting annual events that explore aspects of programme

implementation. A small number highlighted the potential value of gaining feedback from stakeholders or beneficiaries on implementation although yet another complimented the Commission for their approach to involving partners.

The beneficiary survey generated 12 responses from organisations in receipt of a support grant. While this number is too small for detailed analysis, all but one of those in receipt of an organisational support grant under Action 2 - Active civil society (and therefore the target audience for the structured dialogue and annual forum) had taken part on EC consultation events. Individual comments included reporting a feeling that participation is useful (for information sharing, networking and contact with Commission staff), and that the Commission is open to suggestions; but also encompassed those who were uncertain about the outcomes of the meetings.

A recent study conducted for the European Parliament¹ on the funding of NGOs by the European Commission complimented EAC/COMM and EACEA for engaging NGO partners in discussions around programme content, technical and financial issues, but also political context and policy development. It found that the opportunity to be involved in discussions with donors about policy is highly valued among NGOs and that they consistently express a desire to move beyond a relationship based on funding to one grounded in partnership. The study also commended the engagement with membership bodies and umbrella organisations as this enables communication with a wide and diverse group of NGOs and facilitates the establishment of consensus and common positions.

¹ European Parliament Directorate General for Internal Policies: Budgetary Affairs (2010) Financing of Non-governmental Organisations (NGO) from the EU Budget

6.0 Effectiveness

6.1 Progress

EQ8: To what extent are the activities undertaken in the framework of the Europe for Citizens Programme on course for contributing to the achievement of its general and specific objectives of the programme?

The information available to us on spending to date suggests there have been no significant delays to the programme or instances where funding has not been allocated in line with the original profile (outside a very small number of cases where allocations have been carried over into the following year). Supporting information on progress and effectiveness is provided by the stakeholder survey, which asked about the extent to which the programme's achievements were in line with their expectations. None stated that activities supported by Europe for Citizens were exceeding their expectations, although 18 of the 31 answering this question maintained that expectations were being met. Six stated that the programme was not meeting expectations, with these responses coming from civil society organisations and twinning co-ordinators. There was no convergence on the reasons for this feedback, with comments relating to insufficient resources, the flat-rate system, communication issues, 'bureaucracy' and the absence of specific targets, suggesting that there is not a general structural factor at work here. Of the 232 respondents to the beneficiary survey, only three stated they were not on track to make their intended contribution to achieving the objectives of the programme.

The activity reports for 2007 and 2008 list a number of targets and achievements, some of which are described as annual and others as medium-term. This information is displayed in table 6.1, below, together with information from additional sources that is available to fill any gaps. According to this information, the programme has achieved, or is on track to achieve most of these, with the exception of the numbers of civil society projects in 2007, the promotion of projects and media coverage activities.

Table 6.1 Targets and Achievements, 2007 and 2008

Indicator	2007		2008	
	Target	Achievement	Target	Achievement
Citizens involved in projects ¹	350,000	675,000	500,000	900,000
Increasing participation by citizens of new Member States	47% in 2006	54%		
% of organisations taking role of multiplier			30%	n/a
% of participants taking role of multiplier			60%	45% to 88% ²
European civil society organisations	20	21		
Projects by civil society organisations	140	108		
Policy research organisations supported	10	9		
European NGO network	1	1		
Increasing participation by organisations in new Member States	19% in 2006	34%		
Organisations recognising Active European Citizenship	80%	"Practically all"		
Organisations providing input to Active European Citizenship			50%	96% ³
Civil society projects dealing with women's participation in political life			5-10%	14.5%
% of participants feeling more European	50%	93%	50%	71% to 83% ⁴
% of participants feeling more solidarity/tolerance	50%	78% / 93%	50%	72% to 86%
Projects promoted at local level			100%	12 projects (Golden Stars)
Projects promoted at European level			10%	Establishment of EVE portal
Media coverage of Europe for Citizens Forum in participating countries			60%	11 countries (37%)

In addition to this, the results of the stakeholder and beneficiary survey can be used to inform an assessment of how respondents feel that supported activities have made a contribution to meeting the programme's objectives. Stakeholders provided results that are consistent with earlier findings on the relevance of the programme's

¹ Information based on declarations from original applications

² Data for multiplier effect is based on individual participants taking on this role, using a number of statements. Results range from 88% intending to talk to others about the event, to 45% intending to organise events of their own

³ Data based on current beneficiary survey – projects making a contribution to Active European Citizenship

⁴ 2008 data is based on results of postal survey carried out in Spring/Summer 2009. This employed a different methodology to the previous year, with a range of statements used to verify feelings of Europeanness and solidarity/mutual understanding

general and specific objectives: they feel that most progress is being made against the objectives concerning promoting tolerance and mutual understanding, bringing citizens together and fostering action, debate and reflection.

Other types of activity have greatest impact in one specific area. Events, activities and meetings are likely to have greatest impact on enhancing tolerance and mutual understanding as well as bringing people together. Studies, surveys and opinion polls are likely to play an important role in developing a sense of European identity. It is also worth noting that beneficiaries across all types of activity are least likely to feel that their work supports fostering a sense of ownership of the European Union compared to the other Programme objectives.

Table 6.2 Q26 - To what extent do you feel that your organisation's activities contribute to achieving the following objectives of the Europe for Citizens Programme?

	Some contribution	% Respondents	Programme Total	Strong contribution	% Respondents	Programme Total
General Objectives						
To enhance tolerance and mutual understanding between European citizens respecting and promoting cultural and linguistic diversity, while contributing to intercultural dialogue	42	18%	803	183	79%	2,912
To develop a sense of European identity, based on common values, history and culture	56	24%	1,056	167	72%	2,584
To foster a sense of ownership of the European Union amongst its citizens	82	35%	1,316	129	56%	2,129
Specific Objectives						
To bring people together from local communities to share, exchange and learn	50	22%	819	170	73%	2,860
To promote Europe's values and achievements, while preserving the memory of its past	69	30%	1,363	146	63%	2,154
To foster action, debate and reflection through cooperation within civil society organisations at European level	77	33%	1,522	135	58%	2,109

Base: Telephone survey of beneficiaries, 232 respondents. Programme total is weighted by measure to reflect programme composition

It is also important to consider how these responses vary according to Action line. Table 6.3 breaks down the contribution of each Action line to programme objectives, according to the views of beneficiaries.

Project promoters under Action 4 - Remembrance state that their activities have made strong contributions in a number of areas, especially promoting Europe's values and achievements, enhancing tolerance and mutual understanding and developing a sense of European identity, based on common values, *history* and culture. Action 2 – Civil Society is - as expected – making most contribution against the objective of fostering action, debate and reflection through cooperation within *civil society organisations* at European level. It also appears that Action 1 – Active Citizens is strongly linked to the objective of bringing people together from local communities. However it also appears to be having more impact than other Actions against the objective seen as being of least direct relevance or interest to partners and citizens – fostering a sense of ownership of the European Union amongst its citizens.

Table 6.3 Contribution of supported activities by action

	1 – Active Citizens		2 –Civil Society		4 – Remembrance		All Actions	
General objectives	Responses	%	Responses	%	Responses	%	Responses	%
To enhance tolerance and mutual understanding between European citizens respecting and promoting cultural and linguistic diversity, while contributing to intercultural dialogue	91	75%	48	75%	44	94%	183	79%
To develop a sense of European identity, based on common values, history and culture	86	71%	44	69%	37	79%	167	72%
To foster a sense of ownership of the European Union amongst its citizens	73	60%	34	53%	22	47%	129	56%
Specific objectives								
To bring people together from local communities to share, exchange and learn	94	78%	41	64%	35	74%	170	73%
To foster action, debate and reflection through cooperation within civil society organisations at European level	67	55%	50	78%	29	62%	146	63%
To promote Europe's values and achievements, while preserving the memory of its past	66	55%	31	48%	38	81%	135	58%

Base: All responses to beneficiary survey (232) claiming activities make a 'strong contribution' to meeting programme objectives

It is also possible to analyse which types of activity are most likely to support achievement of the Programme's objectives, but again this must be based on the views of beneficiaries. Table 6.4 shows that historical projects (includes a range of commemoration, preservation and realisation activities) have a significant impact on most of the Programme's objectives, and the same is true of the various forms of training, knowledge exchange and best practice. Events, activities and meetings are likely to have greatest impact on enhancing tolerance and mutual understanding as well as bringing people together. Studies, surveys and opinion polls are likely to play an important role in developing a sense of European identity. It is also worth noting that beneficiaries across the types of activity are least likely to feel that their work supports fostering a sense of ownership of the European Union amongst its citizens.

Table 6.4 Contribution by type of activity

	Studies, surveys or opinion polls		Networking		Historical projects		Organisation support		Events or activities		Information and dissemination		Training, knowledge, practice	
	Resp	%	Resp	%	Resp	%	Resp	%	Resp	%	Resp	%	Resp	%
General objectives														
To enhance tolerance and mutual understanding between European citizens respecting and promoting cultural and linguistic diversity, while contributing to intercultural dialogue	39	75%	70	76%	33	87%	73	72%	161	79%	143	79%	116	79%
To develop a sense of European identity, based on common values, history and culture	39	75%	62	67%	30	79%	67	66%	147	72%	132	73%	107	73%
To foster a sense of ownership of the European Union amongst its citizens	33	63%	50	54%	23	61%	58	57%	118	58%	108	60%	91	62%
Specific objectives														
To bring people together from local communities to share, exchange and learn	36	69%	68	74%	31	82%	73	72%	154	75%	133	73%	111	76%
To foster action, debate and reflection through cooperation within civil society organisations at European level	35	67%	59	64%	27	71%	67	66%	133	65%	120	66%	103	70%
To promote Europe's values and achievements, while preserving the memory of its past	29	56%	54	59%	34	89%	58	57%	119	58%	107	59%	87	59%

Base: All responses to beneficiary survey (232) claiming activities make a 'strong contribution' to meeting programme objectives

6.2 Participation in the programme

6.2.1 New participants

EQ11: Does participation in the programme appear satisfactory in terms of the balance between new organisations and those which have received support previously?

This question seeks to understand whether the programme has created or maintained an “inner circle” of supported organisations, potentially to the detriment of new applicants. Although EACEA estimate that approximately 20% of applicants have not applied for funding before, 43% of all respondents to the beneficiary survey represented organisations that had not received funding previously, suggesting that the programme is providing support to significant numbers of new project promoters. The fact that the beneficiary survey includes hosts or co-ordinators as well as partner organisations may explain some of the difference here, meaning that the Programme is regularly involving new project promoters as partners, albeit less frequently than as lead applicant or co-ordinator.

Equally, however, the distribution appears to be bi-modal since almost as many respondents said that they had participated on several occasions or were in receipt of a multi-annual grant. On this evidence, the programme attracts both the well experienced and the inexperienced in fairly equal measure.

Table 6.5 Q11 Has your organisation received support from the Europe for Citizens Programme in previous years or under previous funding rounds?

Option	Responses	%
Yes, on several occasions (or in receipt of multi-annual grant)	90	38.8%
Yes, once (one-off/ individual grant)	37	15.9%
No, this is the first time	100	43.1%
Don't know	5	2.2%
Total	232	100.0%

Base: Telephone survey of beneficiaries, 232 respondents

However the results for different action lines vary, with new applicants forming 63% of beneficiaries under Action 4 – Active European Remembrance, 47% under Action 2 – Active Civil Society and just 33% under Action 1 – Active Citizens for Europe. This is likely to stem from the fact that Action 4 is comparatively new and helps to meet the need associated with a specific, newer 'market'. It also appears that it would be worthwhile considering ways in new project promoters could be attracted to Action 1, especially town twinning citizens meetings. Applicants from new Member States were also more likely to be first time recipients of funding than those in the 'old' Member States, which would be anticipated.

In terms of stakeholders' perceptions, some 16 (of 31) stated that there is a satisfactory balance between new and existing beneficiaries, with six believing that existing beneficiaries are over-represented and one that new

beneficiaries are over-represented¹. There was no clear consensus on any measures that may be required to attract new organisations to the programme, but several proposals were highlighted including the need for confidence building amongst applicants, and providing scope for both larger and smaller grants. The availability of small grants is likely to play a role in allowing new bidders, especially from smaller organisations that have not had significant contact with European programmes before and are less likely to be able to source the amounts of co-financing required for larger bids.

Some 55% of respondents to the survey of ineligible or unsuccessful projects were first-time applicants, suggesting that the bids of new applicants are less likely to be approved than those from organisations that have received funding on previous occasions. However, the fact that over 70% of unsuccessful bids were from small organisations (with 1-49 employees) suggests that size (or that fact that smaller organisations are less likely to have access to staff with the necessary skills and experience), may have more of an impact on the chances of success of bids than whether organisations have previously received funding under this specific programme.

In summary, Europe for Citizens presents opportunities for new applicants and is reaching large numbers of new project promoters, with just under half of all beneficiaries surveyed receiving support for the first time. Remembrance and to a lesser extent Civil Society projects play an important role in bringing new organisations to the programme. In terms of success rates, size of organisation appears to play a greater role than whether they have received funding before, suggesting that capacity is a determinant of success, but also that the skills and expertise of individual staff is key for smaller applicants.

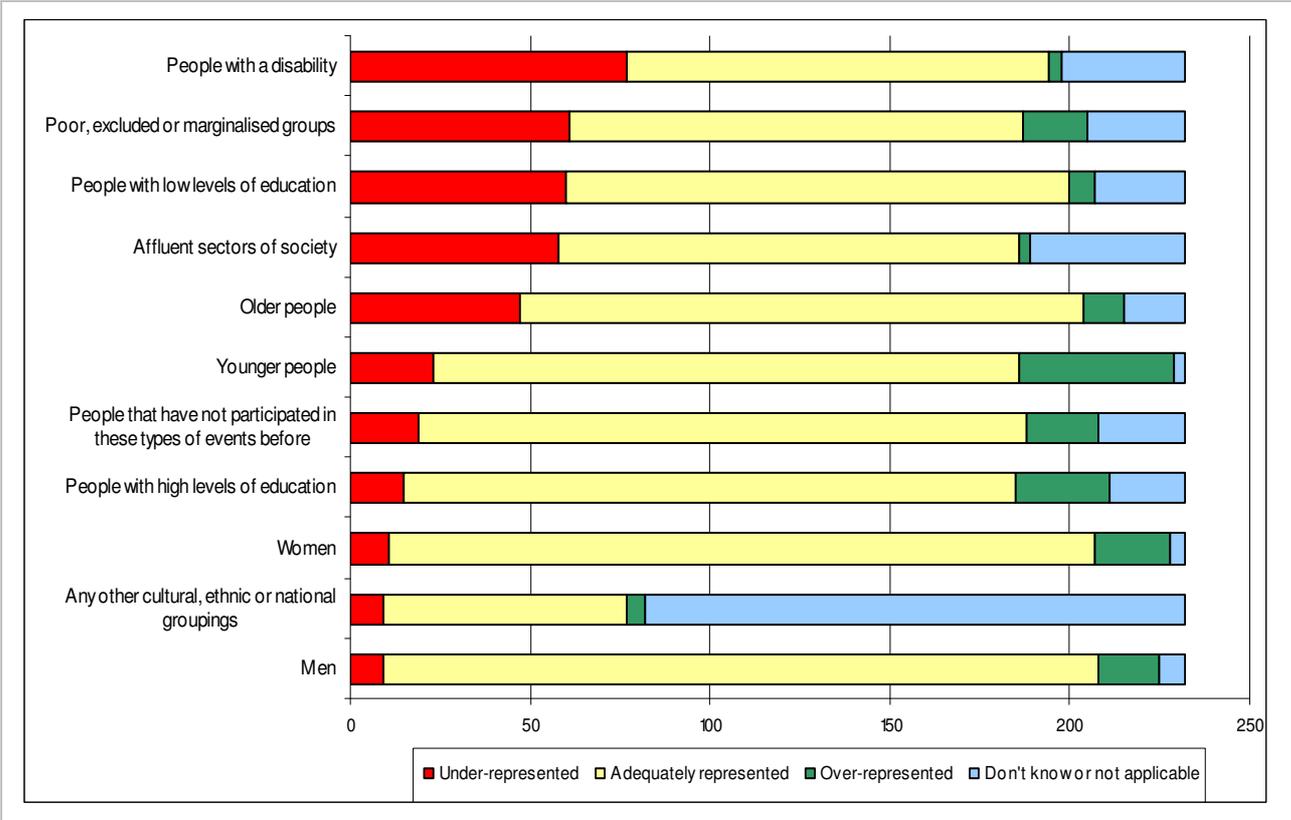
6.2.2 Gender and social groups

EQ13: Does participation in the programme appear satisfactory in terms of equality between men and women? Could any particular patterns be distinguished in this respect from a geographical point of view as well as for the different types of actions?

As we did not have access to data on the composition of participants, findings on the types of people being brought together for these activities and their representativeness, compared with the wider population, are drawn from the beneficiary survey. The survey asked respondents to comment on the representativeness of participants in their organisation's activities, and final results are shown in figure 6.1, below.

¹ Eight responded that they did not know.

Figure 6.1 Q9. Do you feel that the following particular groups or segments of society are adequately represented in your organisation's activities?



Base: Telephone survey of beneficiaries, 232 respondents

The data from the survey shows that project promoters feel that men and women are equally likely to participate in activities; indeed more respondents were likely to believe that either men or women were over-represented as under-represented. The survey also shows that first-time participants in these events are not under-represented in supported activities. These broad patterns are replicated across the three action lines. However, the survey also suggests that the groups most likely to be under-represented in current activities are those from the Roma community (especially if we discount those respondents who had no view), followed by people with a disability, those with low levels of education or people from poor or marginalised groups, as well as older people. The only groups with notable numbers of respondents who saw them as over-represented were those from younger age groups and those with higher levels of education, which is consistent with the literature on the types of people most likely to engage in civic participation activities, although only 19% and 11% respectively had this view.

The review of project reports support this assessment, as they include very little information on the involvement of disadvantaged groups, suggesting that their participation is low. In order to investigate whether this might be due to difficulties at application stage (due to the fact that it is likely to be more expensive, time-consuming and challenging to engage with hard-to-reach groups), we examined the prevalence of disadvantaged groups amongst unsuccessful bids and found that of 70 such bids, three were to be targeted at people from the Roma community, with slightly more aimed at poor and marginalised groups or people with disabilities. This suggests that the low representation of disadvantaged groups in the programme is not likely to be due to a higher failure rate at application stage but rather that there are not enough applications coming through in the first place. We

have included some examples of engaging these groups in the case studies, in order to assess any implications associated with this and identify good practice.

Case study: “The forgotten among the forgotten – remembering the past to build future cohesion”, Servizio Civile Internazionale, Italy, Action 4 – Active European Remembrance

This project was lead by SCI-Italy, an organisation mainly dealing with international volunteer camps, plus partner organizations in Italy and Romania. The main focus was on holding three 5-day-long events, with the aim of promoting the remembrance of the persecution of Roma, Sinti and LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) people under fascist regimes. The project promoters organized a wide range of activities, which included workshops, seminars, public debates with historians and activists, victims' testimonies, films and study-visits. The events were attended by both young and old people, bringing them into direct contact with those who had personally experienced persecution. The discussions also brought the issues up to date, addressing ways of tackling discrimination in the 21st century but also the role that the European Union has played in protecting the rights of minority groups. Although the events were limited in scale (with around 800 direct participants) the promoter placed significant emphasis on dissemination, with the result that at least 30,000 people were reached through newsletters and the project DVD. Arguably, the most significant impacts have been in terms of what this project has led to, with participants organising events and meetings back home and ongoing collaboration between an (extended) international network of partners, many of whom have previously tended to focus on local-level projects. SCI-Italy is also planning to undertaking new projects involving Roma youngsters, such as designing and organising international youth exchanges and European mobility schemes with a special focus on the inclusion of Roma people. Some of the informal partners in this project became official partner organisations in subsequent projects.

6.2.3 Geography

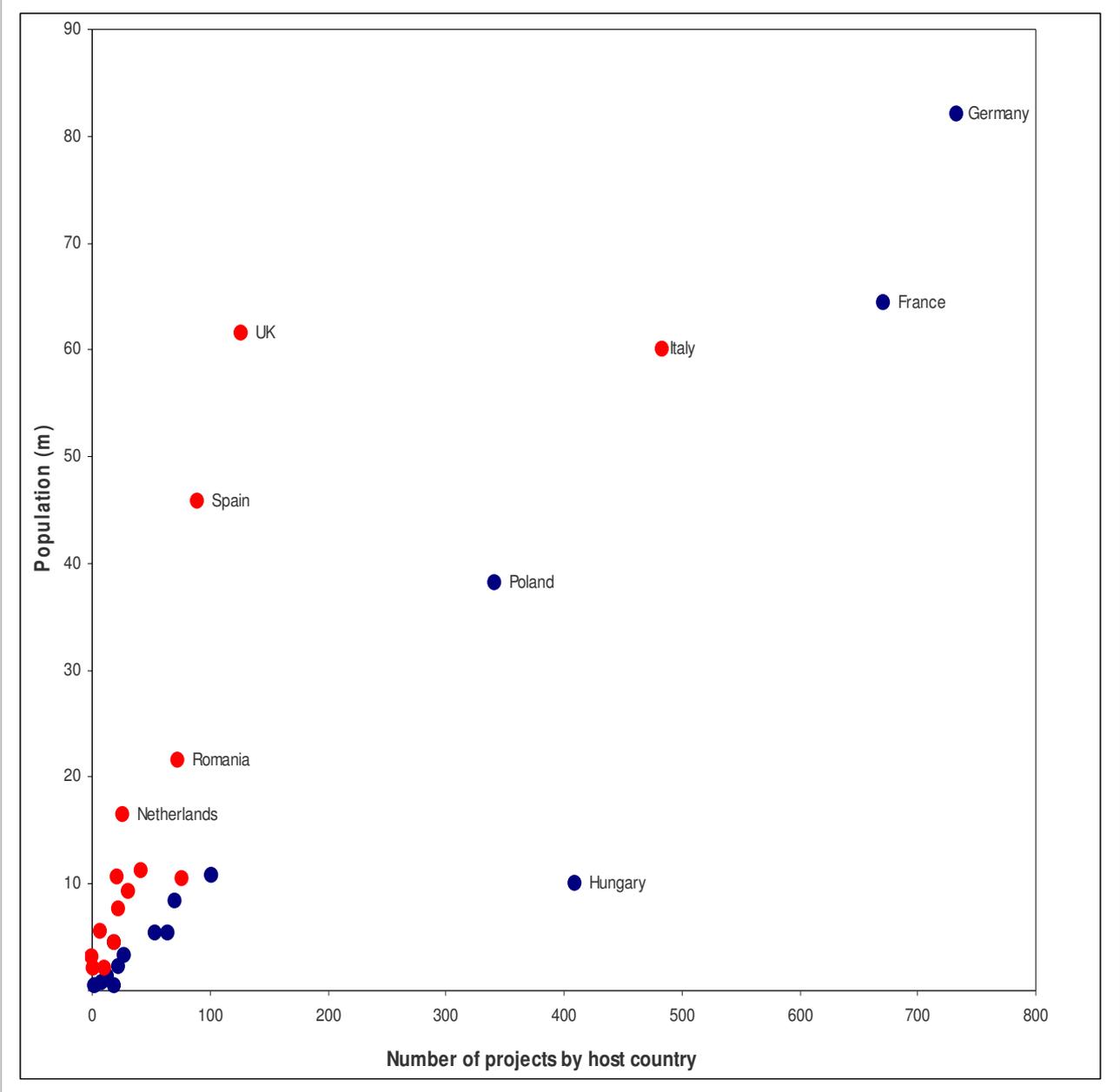
In order to make an assessment of geographical representativeness, information on numbers of projects from information supplied by the EACEA¹ was used, together with the results of the beneficiary survey. Figure 6.2 compares the number of projects by host country with the population of each participating country. This shows that the best-represented countries tend to be those in central and western parts of Europe, especially Hungary, France, Germany, Austria and Poland. Italy also has large numbers of projects, though this is marginally fewer than the number we would expect given the country's population. The cluster of under-represented countries includes many in northern Europe (UK, Netherlands, Denmark and Sweden) as well as in southern Europe and the Balkans (Spain, Portugal, Greece, Romania, Bulgaria, Slovenia as well as the three candidate countries (Albania, Croatia and FYR Macedonia).

There are likely to be a number of factors at work here. As highlighted in earlier section on Europe for Citizen's points, EACEA's analysis found there was no correlation between the existence or efficacy of PECs and the number of applications for each participating country. Countries in central and western Europe have either a long record of participation and well-established capacity able to support these activities, or as in the case of

¹ Information is based on an aggregation of town twinning citizens meetings, networks of twinned towns and citizens projects under Action 1, civil society projects under Action 2 and all remembrance projects under Action 4

Hungary, high demand for twinning activities with neighbouring countries based on ethnicity. As for the under-represented countries, for many this is likely to be connected with capacity, although the fact that the Scandinavian countries perform well in terms of political participation and active citizenship¹ means that there is likely to be an alternative explanation, perhaps to be found in the role of the state in meeting these needs. A further observation is that there are significantly fewer projects than we would expect for both the UK and Spain. Given the diversity of national contexts, a more detailed explanation of this picture may require further investigation by Member States.

Figure 6.2 Geographical distribution (projects vs total population)

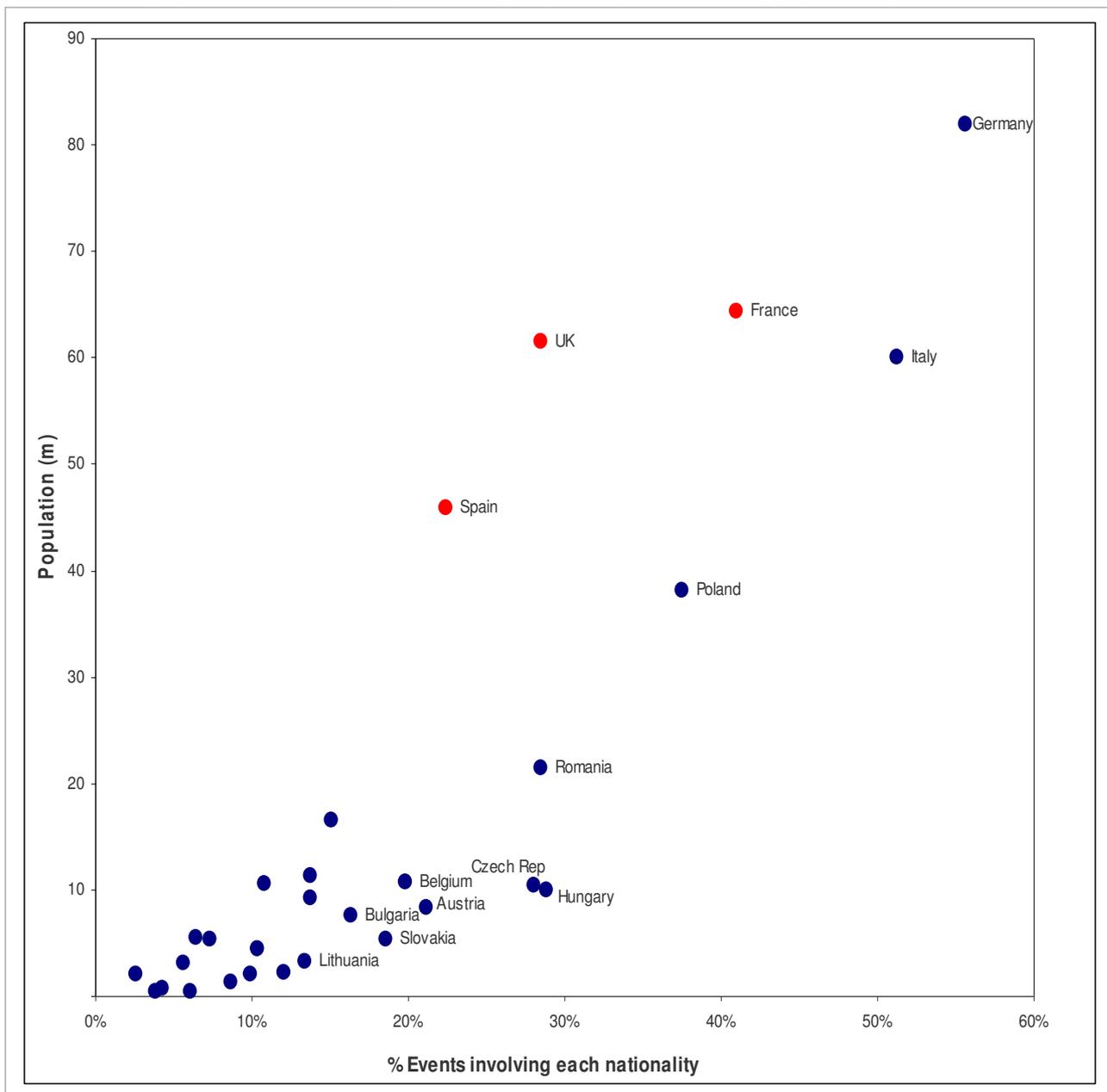


¹ Refer to earlier section detailing the study developing a composite indicator for Active Citizenship by JRC/ CRELL and EIU Democracy Index.

Source: Population data from Eurostat for 2009 and successful projects (not support grants) from EACEA

However it is also possible to look at the nationalities of those taking part in events, and figure 6.3 compares information on the nationality of participants from the beneficiary survey with total population by country. This shows that there is a much broader distribution in terms of the nationality of participants than there is by location of activities. It also shows that citizens of the UK and Spain are still under-represented in programme activities.

Figure 6.3 Geographical distribution (nationality of participants vs total population)



Source: Population data from Eurostat for 2009 and beneficiary survey (Q6. Which nationalities have taken part in events or activities supported by grants under the Europe for Citizens Programme?)

Interestingly, respondents also highlighted the fact that events regularly involve people from outside the circle of participating countries, from elsewhere in Europe and neighbouring territories (especially Ukraine and

Switzerland), to those from much further afield including Africa and South America. The survey also generated a number of comments in relation to problems associated with events in specific countries and covering the cost of flights to and from the more peripheral parts of Europe.

Case study – Commune of Slupno, Action 1, Measure 1.1 Town twinning citizens meeting

Between the 23 and 28 September 2009, a delegation of 32 citizens from the Greek island of Limnos were invited to Bodzanow, a village in the Plock Region of Poland. The visitors were shown the most interesting and significant places in the Bodzanow municipality and the Plock Region, particularly those related to the history and traditions of the area, and the legacy of the Second World War. While the visit was relatively short, and issues could not be covered in a great deal of detail, a number of social, cultural and institutional meetings were organized during the six-day exchange, including debates and reflections about European citizenship and democratization as well as policy seminars. The project promoters felt that these were most successful especially when they dealt with issues directly affecting local people (for example European funds, freedom of movement, agricultural policy). The promoters also stated that events were well publicized in the local area and politicians were involved at various stages. This type of activity shows that town twinning activities have potential to reach rural communities in places where few people have been abroad, or exposed to other cultures, making people aware of the things they have in common through human interactions, but also perhaps serving to make the European Union more tangible and relevant to people.

6.3 Impact

6.3.1 Impact on organisations

EQ12: To what extent does the programme contribute to the capacity-building of civil society at the European level?

One of the major areas where the programme seeks to have an impact is supporting and influencing civil society organisations and movements. These organisations perform a valuable role as intermediaries, having direct contact with citizens – often at a local level – with their activity potentially serving to boost the impact of funding by creating 'multiplier effects'. They also provide a concrete way for citizens to engage with the issues that the Europe for Citizens Programme seeks to promote.

Section 4.3 on community added value highlighted a number of ways in which the programme is felt to support civil society, based mainly on the results of the beneficiary and stakeholder survey. While most believe that the programme has served to extend the scale or scope of activities, many others highlighted its impact in terms of innovation, knowledge-sharing, dissemination activity and mobility.

Eighty two per cent of the respondents to the beneficiary survey (and 84% of those under Action 2 – Active Civil Society) felt that the programme has helped to develop the capacity of their organisation, the skills or confidence of staff, while a similar proportion of stakeholders reported that it had helped to develop the capacity of civil society organisations in general. Seven of the eight European-level CSOs responding to this question felt that the programme contributed to building the capacity of civil society organisations, with five saying it

contributed a great deal to the capacity of the sector. It would appear therefore that the programme is widely seen to be having a capacity-building effect not just on the civil society organisations directly involved in this respect but the vast majority of organisations that participate.

Case study: Active Citizenship Foundation (FONDACA), Action 2, Measure 1 - Structural support for European policy research organisations

Based in Italy, the Active Citizenship Foundation (FONDACA) carries out four main types of activities – research, advanced training, promotion of cultural and scientific dialogue and provision of advisory services – in the fields of civic activism, governance and corporate citizenship. The organisation was created in November 2001 and has been funded under Europe for Citizens since 2008. In addition to core research activities, 2009's work programme included conferences (e.g. concerning the promotion of scientific and cultural dialogue), training in active citizenship, Masters courses in Corporate Citizenship, and public cultural events. FONDACA engages strongly with stakeholders and active citizenship networks, developing relationships, exchanges and partnerships with civic organizations, foundations, companies, banks, public bodies, national and international institutions, Italian, European and American universities, labour and business organizations, Italian and foreign research institutes, information and publishing agencies, as well as some 400 scholars and experts. While they are well established in Italy, it is very challenging for organisations to extend their activities internationally, and EU support has enabled the organisation to increase the scope and scale of outputs, but also address the European dimensions of the issues and policies they deal with. They also established a dedicated press office in 2009, to help them in their efforts to reach beyond their niche audience.

EQ9: How does the programme influence the town twinning movement, European level civil society organisations and think tanks and other organisations directly participating in the programme?

The programme affects the types of organisation participating in the programme in a range of different ways. Stakeholders commented that the programme has provided a degree of impetus to the town twinning movement, encouraging potential beneficiaries to think more in terms of developing links with other themes or policy areas, such as remembrance or the environment. These findings have been backed up by case studies, which highlight some of the possibilities of twinning activities, as well as some preconditions for achieving greater thematic coverage or attracting renewed interest from citizens.

The beneficiary survey included only three think tanks (or policy research organisations) and they were most likely to state that programme funding influences the scale or volume of activities or the capacity of their organisation. However, the case studies have also shown that funding has allowed supported organisations to consider the international or European dimensions of the issues they address as well as develop their international networks.

Case study: Centre Européen d'Etude de Recherche et Nouvelles Technologies (CEERNT), Action 1, Measure 2.2 - Support measures

The European Centre for Studies, Research and New Technologies (CEERNT) is a Brussels-based NGO which aims to promote links between European institutions and local government and universities in Italy. In 2010, CEERNT launched a project aimed at enhancing the content of international twinning exchanges, through the creation of a new actor in local administrations: the twinning manager. The project also seeks to build capacity via a training programme for civil servants, who would become the primary source of support and advice on twinning projects in their communities. The training programme is envisaged as a pilot, delivered to a limited number of participants (circa 20), but replicable in future on a larger scale, at home and abroad (with a view to be transferred to other organisations such as higher education institutions). The project focuses on making a difference at the strategic level, by focussing on key individuals who are thought to be well positioned in their local organisations to enhance the contents and quality of town-twinning. Through these individuals, it is intended that the project will make an impact on all existing and potential twinning initiatives in their communities. Therefore, the beneficiaries of the projects can be thought of as three-fold: firstly the 20 direct participants in the training sessions, secondly their respective organisations (local authorities or association of smaller local authorities), which will benefit in terms of capacity building, leading to more, better and/or more ambitious town-twinning projects; and thirdly, the citizens taking part in enhanced town-twinning exchanges.

6.3.2 Impact on participants

An estimated 2.8 million citizens¹ took part in funded activities in the first three years of the programme suggesting that these activities are of direct relevance and interest at the level of the citizen; this also means that the programme directly affected around 0.5% of the total EU population (or almost 0.7% of the adult population) and will have indirectly reached a further proportion beyond that. Some indication of the latter is provided in the tables below, showing that 88% of respondents to the impact survey conducted in 2009² said they intended to speak to other people about the event they had taken part in. If we apply this to the 2.8m participants, and assume that those individuals who said they would speak to other people about the event spoke to one other person³, then an additional 2.4m citizens would have found out about the programme.

Europe for Citizens ultimately seeks to have an impact on participants, especially in terms of their attitudes, but there is a shortage of current data able to inform judgements in this area. Unfortunately, the review of project reports we undertook includes many assertions about the benefits of participation but a lack of concrete evidence. Clearly large numbers of people have taken part in a wide variety of activities where they were exposed to new cultures and ideas and give very positive feedback about their experiences. However, in their reporting, projects often take positive outcomes to be self-evident and there is a lack of evidence reported by

¹ Data from project declarations provided by EACEA and annual reports from DG COMM

² ECOTEC (2009) Europe for Citizens Survey 2009: Developing impact indicators for the Europe for Citizens programme and adapting them to the 2009 Annual Management Plan

³ Programme total is weighted by Action/ Measure to reflect the overall composition of the Programme

the projects themselves as to the actual effects on the individuals who took part (e.g. What did people learn? How did their opinions or preconceptions change?) either in the short or longer term – although there are also some indications that surveys have often been conducted, even if the results are not given. In addition, concepts like identity, citizenship and values are used but not articulated in terms of what they mean for the people taking part in a particular context.

Fortunately, however, we have access to information from the Europe for Citizens survey conducted by ECOTEC in 2009 which provides a more quantitative assessment of the impact of participation, based on 746 completed postal surveys across four measures – town twinning citizens meetings, thematic networks of twinned towns, citizens projects and active European remembrance¹. The responses have been combined with programme data to give an estimate of the total numbers of people likely to be affected, with more detail on weightings also provided in Annex 3. The tables report findings in terms of learning, actions, mutual understanding, European values and multiplier effects. Table 6.6 shows that while 92% of participants learned more about peoples lives in the partner country, fewer people learned more about the European Union through supported activities.

Table 6.6 Q2 - As a result of attending this event did you do any of the following?

Learning	Respondents	% Respondents	Programme Total
Learned more about people's lives in the country/countries of the other participants	685	92%	2,517,609
Made new contacts or friends in the country/countries of the other participants	583	78%	2,097,526
Learned more about European issues (for example history, politics, culture)	578	77%	2,065,489
Learned more about the European Union	469	63%	1,642,222

Base: Responses to Europe for Citizens Survey 2009 (746). Programme total is weighted by measure to reflect numbers of people taking part

Table 6.7 shows that participation in activities is likely to lead to future actions, especially in terms of direct actions such as a willingness to visit or host visitors from the partner country, but also promoting interest in European projects and issues.

¹ It is worth noting that such information directly from participants in EC-supported activity is rarely available to evaluations at this level and provides a valuable insight into the effects (it is usual to rely on the views of project coordinators).

Table 6.7 Q4 As a result of your involvement in this event, are you more or less likely to?

Actions	More likely or a lot more likely to	% Respondents	Programme Total
Visit the home country/countries of the other participants	556	75%	1,980,859
Host a visitor from the country/countries of the other participants in your home	526	71%	1,935,594
Promote European projects or events to other people	500	67%	1,790,114
Take more of an interest in European issues (history, politics, culture etc)	494	66%	1,721,700
Try to learn the language country/countries of the other participants	328	44%	1,145,313
Live, study, work or engage in voluntary activity in the country/countries of the other participants	268	36%	867,340

Base: Responses to Europe for Citizens Survey 2009 (746). Programme total is weighted by measure to reflect numbers of people taking part

Table 6.8 deals with the issue of European values or European-ness, a complex and highly subjective concept. Nevertheless, this suggests that approximately 80% of participants felt more aware of a shared European culture, identity or heritage or felt more solidarity with their fellow Europeans

Table 6.8 Q5 - As a result of taking part, do you?

European values	Yes	% Respondents	Programme Total
Feel more aware of a shared European culture, identity or heritage	596	80%	2,202,897
Feel more solidarity with my fellow Europeans	573	77%	2,086,160
Feel more European	515	69%	1,775,267
Feel more part of the European Union	489	66%	1,754,874

Base: Responses to Europe for Citizens Survey 2009 (746). Programme total is weighted by measure to reflect numbers of people taking part

Table 6.9 explores feelings of mutual understanding, and while we have no way of knowing what participants' views were before taking part, the results also appear strong in this area. This suggests that 84% of participants intend to take part in events that strengthen links, and 80% believe that the EU should continue to reduce social and economic differences, with a similar number feeling that they know people in other countries better and are more aware of things they have in common.

Table 6.9 Q6 How far do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Mutual understanding	Agree or strongly agree	% Respondents	Programme Total
I intend to take part in more events that strengthen links between different European countries	623	84%	2,288,126
I believe the European Union should continue trying to reduce the social and economic differences between European countries	598	80%	2,240,730
I feel I know people living in the country/countries of the other participants better now	595	80%	2,203,220
I am more aware of the things we have in common with the country/countries of the other participants	599	80%	2,155,908
I am more aware of the different perspectives people from other European countries have	575	77%	2,051,124
I have increased respect for people from the country/countries of the other participants	552	74%	2,006,091
I would give support or assistance to people or groups in the country/countries of the other participants, should they need it	543	73%	1,984,988
I have developed lasting contacts or friendships with people from the country/countries of the other participants	526	71%	1,897,747
I am more concerned about difficulties people in other European countries might face	478	64%	1,783,206

Base: Responses to Europe for Citizens Survey 2009 (746). Programme total is weighted by measure to reflect numbers of people taking part

Table 6.10 deals with the multiplier effect. As mentioned above, very high percentages of people indicated that they would tell other people about the activities they were involved in; and similarly high percentages indicated that they would recommend them or attend similar events in future. Although impressive, these figures nonetheless concern relatively passive follow-up actions. Turning to more proactive measure of impact, not surprisingly the figures fall. Nevertheless, it is striking that over half of the participants said they would become involved in organising or promoting events in future. It is safe to assume that these intentions in many cases will not be realised but even if only one quarter of these respondents actually acted on their intentions then that would represent an eighth of all participants – a considerable multiplier effect.

Table 6.10 Q7 - Concerning this particular event do you think that as a result of your participation you will do any of the following?

Multiplier effects	Yes	% Respondents	Programme Total
Talk to other people (friends, family colleagues, fellow students etc.) about these events	653	88%	2,362,744
Recommend these events to other people	605	81%	2,190,072
Attend more events like this	579	78%	2,078,081
Make new contacts with people or organisations in Europe	395	53%	1,339,362
Become involved in organising or promoting similar events	397	53%	1,303,914
Learn more about the issues discussed during the event	387	52%	1,279,677
Obtain information from web sites or help lines (EU or national?)	327	44%	1,206,979
Develop ideas for events of your own	337	45%	1,168,804
Develop new interests or skills	337	45%	1,120,449
Request further information from local organisations	197	26%	718,590

Base: Responses to Europe for Citizens Survey 2009 (746). Programme total is weighted by measure to reflect numbers of people taking part

In summary, the survey found that taking part in a Europe for Citizens event is likely to have an impact not only on participants' opinions, but also on their future actions. This 'multiplier effect' is relatively clear, as the overwhelming majority intend to take part in more events of this type, and in many cases would happily recommend them to friends and family. The main findings were as follows:

- More than half say they are likely to make new contacts with people or organisations or become involved in organising events as a result of participation.
- Looking at specific future actions, participants are much more likely to visit the partner country or host people from that country than they are to live, study or work there, or indeed learn their language.
- The results associated with mutual understanding are strong, especially in terms of identification with people in other countries, appreciating other perspectives and shared views, but also for ideas of shared culture, identity or heritage.
- Participants most enjoy learning about people's lives in other countries or making new friends and contacts. While most are aware of the European Union's role in these events, learning about the EU is of lesser importance for most participants.
- Civil society and twinning network events appear to have a greater impact on sense of 'Europeanness' and belonging to the EU, while those who have attended a civil society project are more likely to agree with some of the multiplier effect measures, especially in relation to learning the language, hosting visitors from or living or studying in the partner country.

- There is a significant difference between the responses of those attending their first event and those who have attended more than one of this type of event in the past. Those who have attended multiple events are much more likely to feel that they have developed lasting contacts and friendships and are more likely to learn the language, host visitors from or live in the partner country. Significantly, they are also much more likely to state that they plan to develop new contacts, skills or interests, as well as develop their own ideas for events and become involved in organising events themselves

6.3.3 Impact on policy development

EQ10: To what extent does the programme seem to be influencing European and national policies or practices in the area of civic participation?

Less than half of the stakeholders taking part in the web survey believed that the programme supports institutional and process improvements at either EU or Member State level; although two-thirds felt that the programme helps to promote more coherent policy development in the area of active citizenship. There are no clear patterns in responses by type of stakeholder, with both PECs and European-level CSOs split relatively evenly between those who feel the programme has an influence on policy or practice and those who feel it does not.

As highlighted earlier, Member States are linked at a policy level to Europe for Citizens through the Programme Committee, which focuses on building consensus and information-sharing among national partners – predominantly the national ministries responsible for culture. Consultations and interviews have not identified any specific policy initiative at national level that is linked to Europe for Citizens, and a number of countries were highlighted as examples where there is no link to national policy or practice.

The programme has few mechanisms to directly influence policy development or institutional improvements outside the funding of programmes and supporting platforms for co-operation and exchange of experience, and this observation was supported by comments from stakeholders. The reasons given for this included the lack of a legislative framework as citizenship and engagement remains a competence of national governments, combined with a lack of national political commitment or funding directed to the development of active citizenship or civic participation.

Currently, Europe for Citizens exerts influence through project activity and the work of supported organisations, rather than by influencing directly specific policies at European or national level. A number of stakeholders supported this view, stating that the programme has greater impact on individual citizens and society in general, rather than on the development of specific policies. Policies are most likely to be influenced indirectly, through public debate, although the case studies and review of project reports have highlighted a number of ways in which the programme is able to bring citizens into direct contact with policymakers. The information obtained in these samples suggests that policy makers are frequently involved in the Programme in a variety of ways – from being directly involved in project design and execution to giving presentations at events and taking part in closing ceremonies; indeed, it is probably likely that involvement in one form or another is commonplace. Whilst there is little evidence of such involvement having a direct impact on policy, we would be safe in concluding that the programme is likely to be influential in some way on policy makers at both national and local levels.

Case study: 736 Ideas for a dream, CEPS Projectes Socials, Action 1, Measure 2.1 - Citizens projects

CEPS is a Spanish NGO from Barcelona, which has been involved in educational and social projects at the regional level, typically managing such projects on behalf of local authorities. To implement this project CEPS partnered with a consultancy firm that brought the international expertise needed to implement an action at European level, alongside five similar organisations from other EU countries: Belgium, Germany, Greece, Ireland and Italy. The project comprised six workshops in six European cities, bringing together 700 young people from disadvantaged background with the aim of producing 736 artistic postcards, one for each member of the European Parliament (MEP), in order to foster debate on social exclusion and innovative solutions to combating it. The outputs of the workshops were then compiled in a book and exhibited on Europe Day (9th May) in the participant cities as well as in the European Parliament later in the year. Each MEP will also receive a copy of the book. Although the project promoters initially felt that the relatively short term frame for the project of one year would be an obstacle to delivering a quality transnational project, with hindsight it was felt that this served to inject dynamism and focus. The project also introduced a rather innovative way to bring together young people, artistic creation and policy debate and might therefore not have been approved by other mainstream programmes. The Europe for Citizens Programme was seen as an opportunity to explore and experiment with new ways to engage with disadvantaged communities and promote wider participation in policy debates.

In the second half of the Programme it may be useful to explore good practice at national level (suggested examples have included Germany and Sweden), but also to explore practice in other policy areas, an example of which is provided below.

Policy example: EQUAL experience in promoting policy development relating to Asylum Seekers¹.

EQUAL's primary objective has been the mainstreaming of emerging policy and practice lessons. This has happened at the horizontal level, where practices and approaches have been adopted by other practitioners, either working with asylum seekers or in related areas. There are also examples of vertical mainstreaming, and evidence that the messages from EQUAL are being heard by policy-makers and other multipliers at local, regional and national level. EQUAL partnerships have succeeded in getting their results and concerns placed on the different policy agendas, through for example organising events and press meetings, establishing strategic partnerships and "round tables" involving policy makers and by combining forces in National Thematic Networks set up for the purpose of national mainstreaming. In Sweden recommendations have been made on how to develop national policies based on the experience of four EQUAL partnerships and other grass roots activities. A German EQUAL partnership is transferring and communicating good practices through the development of a network. In Italy where the asylum policy is less developed, an EQUAL partnership has focussed on increasing institutional capacity through training those working for local authorities to improve the implementation of policy. In Ireland an EQUAL partnership has established a sub group to transfer lessons to statutory agencies. In the UK an EQUAL partnership is using the mechanism of regional and national seminars cofinanced by a national agency as a means of conveying key policy messages.

This shows that it is crucial to develop an understanding of each national context and tailor methods of influencing policy accordingly and the recently advertised tender for a study on Active Citizenship in the EU should provide valuable information in this area². However, the EQUAL example also highlights the importance of fostering links between different types of policy instruments, and also of linking practical experience of what is happening on the ground with policy-making.

6.4 Sustainability

EQ14: Which of the current activities or elements of the programme would be likely to continue and in which form if Community support was withdrawn or substantially decreased?

The surveys collected the views of stakeholders and beneficiaries on which elements of the programme they felt would be likely to continue if Community support was withdrawn or reduced. Stakeholders were more likely to believe that town-twinning and remembrance activities would continue in some form, as it may be possible for larger municipal authorities or regions to find alternative funding for twinning initiatives, and there could be replacement funding for remembrance activities from national governments or foundations. Others mentioned that civil society organisations would find it most difficult to continue supporting projects, while activities would involve fewer partners, target fewer people and devote less attention to dissemination.

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equal/data/document/etg5-policybrief-dev07_en.pdf

² http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/about/call_tenders/2010/call_tenders_02_2010_en.php

The beneficiary survey asked participants to describe the likely impact of a reduction in funding; their responses have been coded into categories in table 6.11 below.

Table 6.11 Q15 Which of your current activities would be likely to continue if European support was withdrawn or substantially reduced? What form would this take?

Actions	Responses	% Responses
Would reduce scale of activities	42	18%
All activities or majority would cease	31	13%
Would affect reach, international/ EU dimension (e.g. coverage of Eastern Europe)	25	11%
Would focus on core services	19	8%
Named specific activities that would continue	17	7%
Would seek alternative funding from private sponsors, local government	17	7%
Twinning, exchanges, networking or collaborations would continue	17	7%
All activities would continue	15	6%
Would present major difficulties, have a major impact on organisation	13	6%
Would lead to less effective activities, lower quality, less innovation	12	5%
Would focus on media, dissemination, research activities	12	5%
Organisation would continue to operate	11	5%
Would undertake fewer activities, or reduce scope	9	4%
Would use IT, web, phones rather than meetings/ travel	9	4%
Would focus on training and education work	9	4%
Would rely on fees or members contributions	8	3%
Organisation would subsidise from own resources	7	3%
Would reach fewer key target groups, young people, poorer people	6	3%
Would undertake activities less frequently activities	5	2%
Would affect staffing levels or capacity of organisation	4	2%
Would focus on events, meetings	2	1%
Would reduce dissemination or communication	2	1%
Would seek to reduce costs	2	1%

Base: Telephone survey of beneficiaries, 232 respondents. Responses coded into categories

Only 13% of respondents said that their activities would cease completely, suggesting that the majority of activities would be likely to continue, albeit on a reduced scale, with fewer participants, or with a more limited geographical reach. Six per cent said their activities would continue unchanged with significant numbers saying

they would seek to obtain replacement funding, would subsidise activities themselves or ask their members or participants for larger contributions.

A consideration of longer-term sustainability should also incorporate the multiplier effect, specifically the programme's role in encouraging new actors and multipliers. The impact section highlighted that 53% of participants intended to become involved in organising or promoting events of their own and 45% planned to develop ideas for events of their own. Although these responses relate to intentions rather than actions, this supports the view of the programme as a virtuous circle, where supported activities help to spur further activities in future. It also indicates the extent to which intangible outcomes can ultimately lead to tangible action.

6.4.1 Dissemination activity

EQ15: To what extent have the results of the projects been properly disseminated to stakeholders and the public?

One of the major ways in which the current programme developed from its predecessor is that dissemination plans are now included in the evaluation criteria for bids, although we have no information on what applicants have proposed to do, whether these plans have been implemented in full, or what these efforts have achieved. It is also difficult to gain an accurate picture of the exploitable potential of activities, especially at programme level: for this we may require more detailed information on the outputs and results associated with Action 3 – Together for Europe.

Project reports and case studies regularly provide further detail on the dissemination tools promoters have employed, but there is little analysis of their coverage, reach or impact. Through the surveys we have collected information on the communications methods used by beneficiaries, views on their success and also comments on the obstacles to further communication. The information on tools used is displayed below.

Table 6.12 Q12a Which methods have been used to communicate the results of your activities to the public?

Dissemination activity	Yes	% Respondents	Programme Total
Publications, newsletters or leaflets	197	85%	3,410
Media work, press releases or advertising	198	85%	3,343
Web sites, email or interactive media	205	88%	3,284
Events (conferences, seminars or meetings)	186	80%	3,041
Word of mouth	8	3%	200

Base: All respondents to beneficiary survey (232). Programme total is weighted by measure to reflect programme composition

Across all actions, at least 80% of beneficiaries have used each of the main types of communication tools (web sites or interactive media, publications or newsletters, public relations or advertising and events). A number of other methods were mentioned frequently, including posters, banners, use of films, DVDs, interviews and word of mouth. Projects and supported organisations under Action 2 – active civil society, appear to be most likely to communicate their activities, with 95% of beneficiaries stating they used web sites or interactive media, and

90% more traditional types of media work (press releases or advertising). Projects under Action 4 – remembrance, appear to be least likely to disseminate results, though this is based on a smaller sample of interviews.

Case study: What does it mean to be human? Svenska Kommiten mot Anti-Semitism, Action 4 – Active European Remembrance

This project has developed an interactive online platform for use by teachers to explore the experiences of survivors of the Holocaust, to situate these experiences within wider European historical events and to promote reflection on values past and present. The project promoter is an organisation with many years' experience of developing and making available content on this subject, through which activity it has built an extensive network of interested teachers. This resource will be built upon to promote and disseminate new learning tools; the development of which has used a test group of teachers and pupils to ensure relevance and usefulness to a wide cross-section of learners. Developing an online platform, to replace previous reliance on more traditional materials and on actual Holocaust survivors, ensures greater flexibility for teachers and pupils and the future sustainability of remembrance-based learning. The potential for take-up of the learning tools is strong, initially in Sweden via existing networks, and also in Poland where the SKA has an established working relationship with the David Rubinovich Foundation. More widely there is even greater potential for dissemination, simply through translation of the material. Currently the intention is that access to the platform will be free, once teachers have registered. Consideration will be given to future funding models in the light of feedback from the initial operational phase.

While project promoters claim that the overwhelming majority of dissemination activity has been successful, they are most likely to state that events were very successful, while a significant number also mentioned the value of different types of social media or multimedia productions, especially for reaching younger audiences. However, the criteria against which success is measured are not clear. Beneficiaries also highlighted a number of barriers to wider dissemination, including the lack of specific funding for communications, the cost of advertising, language or translation issues and the need for specialist staff.

In summary, while the various dissemination tools are frequently used, there is little evidence available to inform a judgement on how successfully this has been done or whether activities have been publicised to their full potential. The case studies and project reports have also shown that larger beneficiaries, especially policy research organisations and larger civil society organisations have specialist media departments or skills in house, while less should be perhaps expected of smaller organisations and municipalities. While town twinning can generate publicity and interest, project promoters' access to specialist media skills and capacity, or voluntary inputs from members of the community is a major factor in successful dissemination.

7.0 Summary of conclusions and draft recommendations

7.1 Relevance

The objectives of the Europe for Citizens Programme remain valid and relevant to the overarching aim of "giving citizens the opportunity to interact and participate in constructing an ever-closer Europe, thus developing citizenship of the European Union".

Programme data indicates that an estimated 2.8 million citizens took part in funded activities between 2007 and 2009, suggesting there is a significant level of demand.

The evidence that the programme is needed is supported by ongoing disillusionment and disinterest amongst European citizens towards politics in general and EU institutions in particular; intensification of challenges associated with mutual understanding and European identity through the expansion of the EU between 2004 and 2007; and the need to support the development of EU citizenship.

The promotion of activities around mutual understanding, diversity, dialogue and respect for others can help to develop positive impacts for citizens such as an increased sense of belonging and European identity, based on a shared understanding of European values, culture, history and heritage. This in turn has the potential to create changes in the attitudes of participants towards other European citizens, and also boost their involvement in democratic processes and (as a less immediate or direct consequence), their knowledge of and interest in the European Union, EU institutions and processes. The types and range of activities are therefore considered relevant to the programme objectives.

There is some evidence to suggest that participants find it easier to relate to some objectives more than others. This analysis highlights the value placed upon enhancing mutual understanding or fostering connections between citizens and with civil society (especially their ability to learn with and from each other). Stakeholders and beneficiaries place less emphasis on promoting identification with, understanding or appreciation of the European Union.

While the programme's permanent priorities are relevant to the programme's aims, their role is open to question. Although they are helpful in clarifying the programme objectives, we found no evidence that they helped to create synergies between projects or raised visibility.

In relation to the annual priorities, it is hard to argue that those set down for 2007 and 2008 focused attention on 'new or very specific topics', with the exception of 'enlargement' and '50 years of the Treaty of Rome.' In this context, it is perhaps not surprising that when asked for comments on the priorities, a highly varied set of comments was received, some of which showed a lack of understanding of their role.

Recommendation: Review the role and function of permanent and annual priorities, seeking to rationalise them and focus on areas where they are able to add value. This could be by linking to the

societal issues addressed by European Union political agenda or be more closely matching them to issues identified by citizens as being of direct and current interest.

Recommendation: Given the priority accorded to the development of understanding and ownership of the EU and the finding that it is a less common pursued objective than others, greater encouragement should be given to projects to support this through their activities. The annual priorities could be deployed to this end through more specific topics. The programme structure should be reviewed and those Actions which have a strong impact on the development of understanding and ownership of the EU, e.g. Action 2 and 4 should be reinforced.

7.1.1 Coherence

The evaluation found no evidence of any contradiction between the aims and objectives of Europe for Citizens and other Community programmes or initiatives. The programme complements Community programmes in the areas of promoting inter-cultural dialogue, developing participation and democracy in Europe, the European Year of Volunteering 2011, youth policies and the Youth in Action programme as well as education, training and lifelong learning; but less so in terms of sports programmes or multilingualism and language learning.

Europe for Citizens is relevant (directly or indirectly) to a number of different policy areas, especially justice, freedom and security; employment and social policy; and education, training and youth. The nature of the programme and the types of projects and organisations supported suggests that it makes a contribution to aspects of all three of these areas.

There is a further potential role for Europe for Citizens in terms of helping to engage citizens in the formulation of new policies and strategies such as Europe 2020, while consultations highlighted the potential contribution of the programme in terms of linking with or supporting the new European Citizens Initiative, most likely through organisational support grants for civil society organisations.

In terms of the links between the programme and policy initiatives and political priorities at national and European level, the evidence suggests these are limited.

7.1.2 Community Added Value

The added value of the programme in terms of its direct impacts on the scale and scope of activities is clear, though the added value of EU involvement is perhaps greatest in terms of symbolism for civil society partners and developing the international dimension of activities. Combined with support for communication and dissemination activities and the EU's influence on sector capacity and networks, this creates structures that will have an impact on policy into the future.

7.2 Efficiency

Demand for the programme remains strong, and it would appear from the numbers of submitted applications and the approval rate that the budget is some way below levels of actual demand.

The programme's objectives are seen as very ambitious in relation to budgets, and this is intensified when we consider that unlike many other European programmes, Europe for Citizens is applicable to a variety of contexts and has a direct impact on a very broad range of citizens.

An assessment of cost-effectiveness is complicated by the varying scale of projects and the range of outcomes that each seeks to achieve. It is likely that broad access and participation means that a proportion of activities will be dissipated and not sustained, with little in the way of an effect which is both broad and cumulative at national or European levels, and little claim to achieving a 'critical mass'.

There is a case for concluding that the current programme strikes a good balance and achieves good cost-effectiveness, by combining actions which reach out to small scale operators and newcomers and those which support capacity building.

There is also an argument that in the current period of resource constraint, the programme could be developed to a further stage in which capacity building and the use of multipliers is given greater prominence across all activities, not least because of the additional funding levered in via such a focus. However, this is a political choice rather than something that can be 'scientifically' determined.

Recommendation: Investigate the possibility of including specific measures or call for proposals that provide support for capacity building to small-scale and new participants.

Programme implementation was found to be satisfactory and the split in responsibilities between DG EAC and EACEA (the result of the recommendations of previous evaluations) appears to be working well and popular with stakeholders. Specific benefits have included increased opportunities for synergy effects with other programmes managed by the Executive Agency, and improved efficiency in terms of the handling of applications and questions.

It is unlikely that major changes in programme implementation are required. We would not recommend either a centralised model with a greater role for the European Commission or a decentralised model administered by Member States, given the subject matter and transnational nature of many projects.

Financial controls, project monitoring and administrative requirements are satisfactory; there is no clear evidence of a major deterrent effect for applicants or significant numbers of good projects going unfunded. There is some evidence that stakeholders and beneficiaries feel that there may be scope for further rationalisation or simplification of application forms while more qualitative feedback on applications would be appreciated. The possibility of servicing applications in more (than the three working) languages could also be investigated.

Recommendation: Keep structure and content of application forms (e-forms) under review, with a view on simplifying wherever possible. Review procedures relating to feedback on bids and investigate the possibility of processing applications in additional languages.

There are considerable levels of demand for Actions/ Measures, such as Active European Remembrance and the Measures linked to mobility (1.6) and operating grants (2.1 and 2.2), suggesting that it has not been possible to support a large number of high quality bids.

Recommendation: Investigate increasing the levels of funding allocated to these types of measure in future.

Most beneficiaries appear satisfied with the size of grants awarded. Larger grants would be likely to encourage projects that are larger, more ambitious, broader in content, coverage and reach but also take place over a longer time-period. However the continued availability of smaller amounts contributes to greater geographical coverage and reach.

There may therefore be an argument for increasing maximum limits in some areas, but it appears that there is a trade-off between encouraging the development of quality, high impact events and large numbers of participants. Larger grants will not necessarily be the best way of increasing levels of participation, as programme data shows that the small town twinning grants provide around 85% of all participants.

Recommendation: maintain lower grant limits, but trial raising grant ceilings for actions, measures or types of activity highlighted as being most effective. As the funding ceiling for civil society projects is already scheduled to increase to €150,000 from 2011, this should prioritise Action 4 – Active European Remembrance,

Recommendation: Address the question of how the programme maintains increasing total levels of participation and increasing the quality, innovative content or length of supported activities and therefore the impact on participants and organisations.

Although there was some evidence that the programme is not well known at national or regional levels, the programme is attracting sufficient numbers of applicants, many of these who have not previously been involved with the programme.

There is very little substantial evidence of co-financing mechanisms having a clear qualitative impact on the work of projects, although a range of administrative implications were highlighted. The fact that many feel that these mechanisms serve to reduce the administrative burden means that they are likely to have a more positive than negative impact – at least indirectly - by reducing the time supported organisations need to spend on compliance.

Since they began to be established in 2008, the Europe for Citizens Points (PECs) have not so far had a major impact on the programme's results, but there is significant potential for exploiting their information and support capabilities to a greater degree, especially in relation to first-time programme participants.

Recommendation: The impact of PECs (both individually and as a network) should continue to be monitored as they develop their capabilities and become more established.

The Structured Dialogue and Annual Forum are seen as useful and constructive by stakeholders and the beneficiaries of support grants. Feedback received from the Structured Dialogue group highlights the contribution this group has made to programme implementation, especially in terms of recent revisions to Action 1 and Action 2, and the setting of annual priorities. Consultation processes help these organisations to play a partnership role and connect the programme to the policy issues that civil society organisations and the citizens

they represent feel to be of most importance. Europe for Citizens was also mentioned as an example of good practice in this area by the recent study for the European Parliament¹ on the funding of NGOs.

7.3 Effectiveness

7.3.1 Progress

Programme spending to support projects is consistent with expectations at this stage and in general annual and medium-term targets related to activities (e.g. number of projects and participation rates) are being met².

There have been no significant delays to the programme, or instances where funding has not been allocated in line with the original profile. Therefore in terms of operational objectives, the programme may be considered on course. This conclusion is supported by evidence from consultations and the beneficiary survey.

All objectives are being supported by activities, though not to the same degree. Project promoters are most likely to state that their activities make a strong contribution to enhancing tolerance and mutual understanding, bringing people together and developing a sense of European identity. In line with views on relevance, projects see a less direct connection with the objective of fostering a sense of ownership of the European Union amongst its citizens.

Activities under Action 4 – Remembrance state that their activities have made strong contributions in a number of areas, especially promoting Europe's values and achievements, enhancing tolerance and mutual understanding and developing a sense of European identity, based on common values, history and culture.

Across Action lines, the various forms of training, knowledge exchange and best practice have a significant impact on most of the Programme's objectives, while other types of activity have greatest impact in one specific area.

Recommendation: Review the current structure of the Europe for Citizens programme in view of reinforcing Actions for which there is a strong latent demand and/or which have a significant effect on the development of understanding and ownership of the EU. This would include raising the level of funding allocated to Action 4 - Active European Remembrance, the organisational support grants under Action 2 – Active Civil Society, and new initiatives such as the Mobility measures under Action 1 (measure 1.6). This could also include encouraging bids under other actions or measures that address issues of remembrance, shared history and European values.

Recommendation: Expand the role of training, capacity building and support for multipliers across all measures.

¹ European Parliament Directorate General for Internal Policies: Budgetary Affairs (2010) Financing of Non-governmental Organisations (NGO) from the EU Budget

² Based on Activity Reports from 2007 and 2008.

7.3.2 Participation

Europe for Citizens presents opportunities for new applicants and is reaching large numbers of new project promoters, with just under half of all beneficiaries surveyed receiving support for the first time. There are significant variations between action lines with Remembrance and to a lesser extent Civil Society projects playing an important role in bringing new organisations to the programme, in the same way as town twinning citizens meetings provide an opportunity for smaller organisations to take part.

In terms of success rates,, size of organisation appears to play a greater role than whether they have received funding before, suggesting that capacity is a determinant of success, but also that the skills and expertise of individual staff is key for smaller applicants.

Evidence suggests that men and women are equally likely to participate in activities, while the groups most likely to be under-represented in current activities are those from the Roma community, followed by people with a disability, those with low levels of education, people from a range of other poor or marginalised groups and older people. This observation is consistent with the wider literature on civic participation.

It is likely that this relative under-representation is linked to difficulties around engaging "hard to reach" groups, although nonetheless there are some examples of projects that have successfully achieved this. The review of a sample of project reports also suggests that the participation of disadvantaged groups in the Programme is comparatively low, while analysis of a sample of ineligible bids shows that applicants specifically targeting these groups are not associated with a higher failure rate.

Recommendation: Explore ways to further encourage projects that mainstream participation of people from disadvantaged or 'hard-to-reach' groups. This could be done by sharing lessons from projects that have successfully involved these groups (and the problems and obstacles they identify) and by giving more weight during the selection procedure to the projects which involve "hard-to-reach" groups

The countries best-represented in activities are from central and parts of western Europe, especially Hungary, France, Germany, Austria and Poland. The cluster of under-represented countries includes many in northern Europe (UK, Netherlands, Denmark and Sweden) as well as in southern Europe and the south-eastern Europe (Spain, Portugal, Greece, Romania, Bulgaria, Slovenia as well as the three countries participating in the programme (Albania, Croatia and FYR Macedonia). There are likely to be range of factors associated with this, including the length of time that twinning links have been operating for or the existence of capacity able to support these activities. The presence or efficacy of PECs does not appear to be a major factor. Given the diversity of national contexts, a more detailed explanation of this picture may require further investigation by Member States.

Recommendation: Address the current imbalance and explore ways to ensure better participation of certain regions and countries which appear under-represented in activities, perhaps in collaboration with the Europe for Citizens Points

However it is also possible to look at the nationalities of those taking part in events using the beneficiary survey, showing that there is a much broader distribution in terms of the nationality of participants than there is by location of activities.

7.3.3 Impacts

The programme is widely seen to be having a capacity-building effect on civil society organisations directly involved in the Programme, but also on the majority of organisations that participate in some way. This is most frequently manifested through an extension in the scale or scope of activities, but also be promoting innovation, knowledge-sharing, dissemination activity and mobility

The programme has also provided a degree of impetus to the town twinning movement, encouraging potential beneficiaries to think more in terms of developing links with other themes or policy areas, such as remembrance or the environment.

Recommendation: Focus more on theme-based or project-based twinning activities, exploiting their potential for linking to local government capacity building and ensure sure that twinning activities bring policy-makers and citizens together

The policy research organisations consulted stated that programme funding influences the scale or volume of activities or the capacity of their organisation. The case studies have also shown that funding has allowed supported organisations to consider the international or European dimensions of the issues they address as well as develop their international networks.

There is shortage of current data able to inform judgements about how the programme is affecting participants, and the review of final reports provided little detailed information in this area. However, the Europe for Citizens survey undertaken in 2009 by ECOTEC provides more detailed information about the effects of participation in terms of learning, actions, mutual understanding, European values and multiplier effects. The main findings are as follows:

- More than half say they are likely to make new contacts with people or organisations or become involved in organising events as a result of participation.
- Looking at specific future actions, participants are much more likely to visit the partner country or host people from that country than they are to live, study or work there, or indeed learn their language.
- The results associated with mutual understanding are strong, especially in terms of identification with people in other countries, appreciating other perspectives and shared views, but also for ideas of shared culture, identity or heritage.
- Participants most enjoy learning about people's lives in other countries or making new friends and contacts. While most are aware of the European Union's role in these events, learning about the EU is of lesser importance for most participants.
- Civil society and twinning network events appear to have a greater impact on sense of 'Europeanness' and belonging to the EU, while those who have attended a civil society project are more likely to agree with some of the multiplier effect measures, especially in relation to learning the language, hosting visitors from or living or studying in the partner country
- There is a significant difference between the responses of those attending their first event and those who have attended more than one of this type of event in the past. Those who have attended multiple events are much more likely to feel that they have developed lasting contacts and friendships and are more likely to learn the language, host visitors from or live in the partner country. Significantly, they are also much more

likely to state that they plan to develop new contacts, skills or interests, as well as develop their own ideas for events and become involved in organising events themselves

Recommendation: Review the structure of the project final reports to further encourage inclusion of findings from any user surveys that have been carried out and especially to include more information on whether attitudes have changed and how, and what the likely impact of activities is likely to be in terms of future behaviours and actions. Investigate ways to ensure that all projects record information on how activities have influenced public or media debates or involved policy-makers.

The extent to which the programme seems to be influencing European and national policies or practices in the area of civic participation is difficult to assess. Feedback from stakeholders on this point is inconclusive and few examples were highlighted during consultations. Some of the reasons behind this may include a lack of mechanisms to directly influence policy development or institutional improvements, lack of appropriate national legislative frameworks, and weak political commitment or funding for the development of active citizenship or civic participation. It is therefore more likely that the programme exerts influence through project activity and the work of supported organisations, rather than by influencing specific policies at European or national level.

Recommendation: Strengthen links with policy makers both at the programme and project level by exploring the possibility of organising events, press meetings, partnerships and round tables bringing policy-makers, supported organisations and their networks together to address specific aspects of active citizenship policy and by encouraging supported projects to deliver their outcomes to policy makers.

7.3.4 Sustainability

The balance of responses from both surveys suggests that removing or reducing the level of funding would impact the scale of activities and numbers of participants, but it would also affect the international dimension of activities, with less networking and travel. Stakeholders suggest that of all the different types of activity, civil society projects would be least likely to continue if funding under Europe for Citizens was withdrawn or reduced.

Only a very small number of respondents said that their activities would cease completely, suggesting that the majority of activities would be likely to continue, albeit on a reduced scale, with fewer participants, or with a more limited geographical reach. Six per cent said their activities would continue unchanged with significant numbers saying they would seek to obtain replacement funding, would subsidise activities themselves or ask their members or participants for larger contributions.

Nevertheless the programme is able to achieve longer-term sustainability by developing capacity across civil society, and by encouraging participants to become future actors and 'multipliers' in their own right. The impact section highlighted that 53% of participants intended to become involved in organising or promoting events of their own and 45% planned to develop ideas for events of their own. Although these responses relate to intentions rather than actions, this supports the view of the programme as a virtuous circle, where supported activities help to spur further activities in future. It also indicates the extent to which intangible outcomes can ultimately lead to tangible action.

7.3.5 Dissemination

While the various dissemination tools are frequently used, there is little evidence available to inform a judgement on how successfully this has been done or whether activities have been publicised to their full potential. Beneficiaries highlighted a number of barriers to wider dissemination, including the lack of specific funding for communications, the cost of advertising, language or translation issues, the need for specialist staff and a lack of interest from (especially national) media.

The case studies and project reports have also shown that larger beneficiaries, especially policy research organisations and larger civil society organisations have specialist media departments or skills in house, while less should be perhaps expected of smaller organisations and municipalities. While town twinning can generate publicity and interest, project promoters' access to specialist media skills and capacity, or voluntary inputs from members of the community is a major factor in successful dissemination.

Recommendation: Encourage projects to not only incorporate information on the dissemination tools they have used, but to analyse their impact and reach and identify the obstacles faced.

Recommendation: Increase the effectiveness of Action 3 – Together for Europe by more strategic and participatory approach. This should focus on following up high-profile events, studies and other instruments of Action 3 and their impact on policy developments.

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