

EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

PROJECT	
Participant:	Moletu Rajono Savivaldybes Administracija
PIC number:	931009687
Project name and acronym:	30 Years of Maastricht: Reflections on the Past, Present, and Future of Europe - MAASTRICHT30

EVENT DESCRIPTION	
Event number:	3rd Event
Event name:	Let's Vote In 2024 EU Elections!
Type:	Conferences
In situ/online:	<i>In-situ</i>
Location:	Mezdra, Bulgaria
Date(s):	September, 12th- 15th, 2024
Website(s) (if any):	https://www.moletai.lt/maastricht30/
Participants	
Female:	41
Male:	23
From country 1 [Bulgaria]:	46
From country 2 [France]:	1
From country 3 [Greece]:	2
From country 4 [Italy]:	3
From country 5 [Lithuania]:	3
From country 6 [Malta]:	2
From country 7 [Portugal]:	5
From country 8 [Spain]:	2
Total number of participants:	64
From total number of countries:	8
Description	
<i>Provide a short description of the event and its activities.</i>	

The third event of the EU-funded project "**30 Years of Maastricht: Reflections on the Past, Present, and Future of Europe**" was hosted in Mezdra and Sofia, Bulgaria, from September 12 to 15, 2024, under the CERV Programme's Network of Towns initiative. It brought together 64 participants, including 18 international delegates from eight European countries—Lithuania, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Malta, Bulgaria, Italy, and France. This gathering offered a significant platform to reflect on the Maastricht Treaty's 30-year legacy, particularly its impact on EU citizenship, economic stability, and political cooperation. The event successfully blended formal discussions, cultural activities, and interactive workshops to foster civic engagement, intercultural understanding, and collaboration among European cities.

The event objectives were clear and multifaceted: to explore the Treaty's historical and modern significance, strengthen ties between partner towns, promote active civic participation, and share knowledge and best practices. Activities were carefully designed to facilitate youth engagement, emphasize the importance of voting in European elections, and inspire collective action toward shared European goals. Discussions addressed challenges to voter participation, the role of democratic institutions, and the transformative potential of EU-funded projects in local communities.

Highlights of the event included expert lectures by prominent speakers such as Bulgarian Parliament Deputy Krasen Krastev, who emphasized Bulgaria's economic and institutional progress within the EU, and Mezdra's Mayor Ivan Asparuhov, who showcased the tangible benefits of EU-funded initiatives in regional development. Workshops provided participants with an opportunity to discuss barriers to civic engagement and co-develop strategies to enhance voter turnout and democratic participation. Participants praised the interactive nature of these sessions, which facilitated open dialogue and idea sharing.

Cultural visits to the Bulgarian Parliament and historic landmarks deepened participants' understanding of Bulgaria's heritage and its integration into the European framework. Networking opportunities throughout the event allowed delegates to forge connections, exchange experiences, and lay the foundation for future collaborations. Feedback from attendees was overwhelmingly positive, with high ratings for organization, logistics, and content. Suggestions for improvement included incorporating more free time for personal exploration and diversifying informal activities.

This was the program of activities:

Day 1: September 12th, 2024

- Arrival of international delegations in Sofia.
- A Bulgarian-themed welcome dinner provided an opportunity for introductions and a briefing on the event agenda.

Day 2: September 13th, 2024

- **Morning Session:** Hosted at the House of Europe in Sofia:
 1. **Project Presentation** by Ms. Yordanka Chobanova, Head of the European Commission in Bulgaria.
 2. **Conference on EU Elections:** Addressed voting challenges and strategies to overcome barriers.
 3. **Visit to the Bulgarian Parliament:** Participants learned about the functioning of democratic institutions.
- **Cultural Tour:** Guided visits to Sofia's historical landmarks, including the Alexander Nevsky Cathedral and the city's Old Town.
- Dissemination activities through social media and press coverage.

Day 3: September 14th, 2024

- **Transfer to Mezdra:** Activities began at the Mezdra Secondary School:
 1. A warm welcome featuring a musical performance by local students.
 2. A workshop on civic engagement, focusing on voter participation and the significance of EU policies in local communities.
- **Cultural Exploration:** Visits to the Mezdra Archaeological Complex and local sites highlighting Bulgaria's rich cultural heritage.
- Evening discussions on evaluation outcomes and planning for the next event in Malta.

Day 4: September 15th, 2024

- Departure of delegations

Dissemination efforts effectively amplified the event's reach through press releases, webpages updates, and local media coverage. Materials and reflections collected during the event will contribute to an e-book documenting the project's findings, which will serve as a resource for promoting European integration themes.

In conclusion, the third event in Mezdra, Bulgaria, emphasized the transformative impact of the Maastricht Treaty while fostering cross-border cooperation and youth engagement. The event successfully highlighted the importance of EU values, democratic participation, and grassroots involvement through conferences, workshops, and cultural exchanges. Participants explored strategies to address voter apathy, strengthen civic engagement, and leverage EU initiatives for local development. Cultural activities, such as visits to the Bulgarian Parliament and historical landmarks, enriched the program by showcasing Bulgaria's heritage, further strengthening intercultural ties. The positive feedback from participants and the dissemination of event outcomes via media and an upcoming e-book underscored its success, laying a strong foundation for future collaborations and reinforcing the shared European commitment to unity and cooperation.

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