

**Study on the Role of Local and Regional
Authorities in Promoting EU Citizenship
and Citizens' Rights**

**The report was written by
Centre for Strategy and Evaluation Services (CSES).
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Table of Contents

- Executive Summary i**
- 1. Introduction..... 1**
 - 1.1. Resume – Study Objectives..... 1
 - 1.2. Research Plan 1
 - 1.3. Methodological Issues..... 3
 - 1.4. Structure of the Report 4
- 2. Background & Review of Existing Literature..... 5**
 - 2.1. Background – EU Citizenship..... 5
 - 2.2. Review of Existing Literature 8
 - 2.2.1. *Overview – main obstacles in exercising EU citizens’ rights* 8
 - 2.2.2. *Right to free movement and residence* 8
 - 2.2.3. *Electoral rights*..... 10
 - 2.2.4. *Right to complain to Ombudsman and right to petition the European Parliament*
12
 - 2.2.5. *Action taken to promote EU citizens’ rights* 13
 - 2.2.6. *Conclusions* 14
- 3. Survey Analysis & Case Studies 17**
 - 3.1. Analysis of Survey Responses 17
 - 3.1.1. *Electoral Rights*..... 18
 - 3.2. Right to Free Movement and Residence 22
 - 3.2.1. *Right to Complain to the Ombudsman and to Petition the European Parliament*
24
 - 3.2.2. *Overall awareness of EU citizens’ rights*..... 25
 - 3.3. Case Studies on Best Practice 26
 - 3.3.1. *Methodological Framework*..... 26
 - 3.3.2. *Promotion of EU citizens’ rights in general* 30
 - 3.3.3. *Electoral Rights*..... 37
 - 3.3.4. *Right to free movement and residence* 50
 - 3.3.5. *Right to complain to EU Ombudsman and Petition the EP* 64
 - 3.4. Critical Comparison of Case Studies 66
 - 3.4.1. *Electoral rights*..... 67
 - 3.4.2. *Right to free movement and residence* 68
 - 3.4.3. *Right to Complain to EU Ombudsman and Petition the European Parliament* .. 70
 - 3.4.4. *Vertical and horizontal dimension of projects promoting EU citizenship and citizens’ rights*..... 70
- 4. Strategic Framework for LRA Promotion of EU Citizenship 73**
 - 4.1. Overview 73
 - 4.2. Step 1 - Baseline Assessment..... 73
 - 4.3. Step 2 - Development of Strategy 74
 - 4.4. Step 3 - Implementation Framework..... 76
 - 4.5. Step 4 - Monitoring and Evaluation 77
- 5. Conclusions & Recommendations 79**
 - 5.1. Overall Conclusions 79
 - 5.2. Right to free movement and residence 80
 - 5.3. Electoral rights 81
 - 5.4. Right to complain to the Ombudsman and to Petition the EP..... 83
- Bibliography 85**

Executive Summary

Below we provide a summary of the main conclusions and recommendations of the Study on the Role of Local and Regional Authorities in Promoting EU Citizenship and Citizens' Rights. The study was carried out in 2012 for the Committee of the Regions by the Centre for Strategy & Evaluation Services (CSES).

Research for this study was undertaken in 2012 for the Committee of the Regions by the Centre for Strategy & Evaluation Services (CSES). As part of the research, CSES carried out a survey of Local and Regional Authorities to help identify case studies on the promotion of EU citizenship and citizens' rights. This material and other aspects of the research were used to prepare good practice examples and a wider set of recommendations on the role of Local and Regional Authorities.

Introduction - EU Citizenship and Citizens' Rights

The legal concept of citizenship of the European Union was formally introduced in 1993 by the Treaty of Maastricht. Every person holding the nationality of an EU Member State is automatically a citizen of the European Union (EU).

EU citizenship does not replace national citizenship but provides all EU citizens with an additional set of rights that are guaranteed by EU treaties. EU citizenship confers a number of rights:

- Right to vote and stand as a candidate in European Parliament and municipal elections;
- Right to free movement and residence throughout the EU Member States;
- Right to complain to the EU Ombudsmen and right to petition to the European Parliament.

The launch of the **European Citizens Initiative instrument** in April 2012, the upcoming **European Year of Citizens 2013**, the planned **EU Citizenship Report 2013** and the **elections to the European Parliament in 2014** provide a window of opportunity for strengthening awareness and knowledge about the EU citizens' rights, both among citizens and public authorities.

Background

EU citizens' rights are enshrined in Article 20 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU. Many EU citizens' rights relate to EU citizens who have exercised their rights to free movement and reside as workers, students or retired persons in a Member State other than the one of which they are nationals. But they also apply to citizens that move across borders for very short periods of time (for example, students, people travelling for business, and tourists). Other EU citizens' rights are not dependent on mobility. Such rights include the right to complain to the EU Ombudsman and the right to petition the European Parliament. EU citizens' rights are now also enshrined in Chapter V of the EU's Charter of Fundamental Rights.

The European Court of Justice has included the concept of EU citizenship in a number of its rulings. In the case *C-184/99 Grzelczyk*, the Court stated that EU citizenship is a fundamental right for nationals of the Member States which enables them to enjoy the same treatment in law irrespective of their nationality. Furthermore, in cases *C-413/99 Baumbast*

and Rand C-200/02 Zhu and Chen, the Court underlined the right to free movement and residence in other Member States, therefore recognising EU citizenship as a source of free movement rights.

The new legislative features introduced by the **Treaty of Lisbon** - notably the **Citizens' Initiative** - have reinforced the status of EU citizenship as being additional, and not merely complementary, to national citizenship. EU citizenship and citizens' rights are important to the fundamental rights of the individual, enabling everyone to receive equal treatment irrespective of their nationality.

For its part, the Committee of the Regions has undertaken various initiatives in relation to EU citizenship and citizens' rights:

- In the **Committee of the Regions' CIVEX Commission's 2012 work programme**, an emphasis is put on the role of Local and Regional Authorities in mobilising citizens and fostering active citizenship at the European, national, regional and local levels.
- Likewise, the **Resolution on the Priorities of the Committee of the Regions for 2013 in view of the Work Programme of the European Commission** underlines the need to focus on the local and regional dimension of initiatives to strengthen citizens' rights.
- The Committee of the Regions has also prepared an **own-initiative opinion on Strengthening EU citizenship: Promotion of EU citizens' electoral rights**. This opinion seeks to contribute to the promotion of EU citizenship and citizens' rights, in particular by focusing on the right enshrined in the Lisbon Treaty for EU citizens to vote and stand as candidates in municipal elections and in elections to the European Parliament.

Obstacles to Exercising EU Citizens' rights

The **Citizenship Report 2010** and the accompanying reports on progress towards EU citizenship, and the **evaluation of the 2009 European Parliament elections**, showed there are still a number of obstacles to fully exercising EU citizens' rights.

More particularly, the Report noted that "a gap still remains between the applicable legal rules and the reality confronting citizens in their daily lives, particularly in cross-border situations". Grouped into four categories, the Report identified 25 different obstacles faced by citizens as private individuals, as consumers, as residents, students and professionals, and as political actors.

An important conclusion in the Citizenship Report 2010 is that in many areas the lack of EU legislation is not the main reason why citizens are facing obstacles in the exercise of their rights. It identifies instead the need for actions to ensure legislation is properly implemented, and to raise citizens' awareness of their rights, as being necessary to eliminate these obstacles:

- **Guaranteeing that citizens' rights are fully enforced on the ground** by the Member States (e.g. properly transposing EU directives into national law);
- **Easing citizens' daily life by making the exercise of individual rights simpler**(e.g. recommending good practices to reduce costs and administrative burdens);
- **Raising citizens' awareness about their rights** through targeted information dissemination and other activities.

The Opinion of the Committee of the Regions on the EU Citizenship Report 2010 highlights **the importance of Local and Regional Authorities in helping to overcome obstacles and in promoting EU citizenship**. It notes the potential for European citizenship to help build European democracy and declares itself in favour of initiatives “capable of increasing citizens’ participation in the democratic process of the Union and contributing significantly to eliminating the EU’s democratic deficit”.

In May 2012, a **public online consultation on EU citizenship** was launched to ask citizens and organisations about obstacles they encounter in their daily lives when seeking to exercise their EU citizens’ rights. A survey was also carried out by CSES for the Committee of the Regions to obtain Local and Regional Authorities’ views on EU citizens’ rights while another survey, carried out by Eurobarometer, focused on the perceptions of individual citizens.

- According to the Eurobarometer (294) findings, although the majority (79%) of EU citizens claim **familiarity with the term “citizen of the European Union”**, only 43% say they know its meaning and less than one-third (32%) of respondents from the 27 EU Member States consider themselves well informed about their rights as citizens of the European Union.
- Interestingly, from the perspective of Local and Regional Authorities, the CSES survey indicated that **awareness of EU Citizenship and citizens’ rights tends to be higher amongst non-national EU citizens in comparison to national EU citizens within a particular community**. Whereas 30% of the former group are seen as having ‘quite’ or ‘very’ high levels of awareness of their rights, this was only just over 14% in the case of the latter group.
- The **manner in which legislation is implemented** often acts as the catalyst for the rise of many obstacles. There is a need for Local and Regional Authorities to cut red tape in order to ensure efficient implementation of EU citizens’ rights.

Role of Local and Regional Authorities

Local and Regional Authorities are the closest public body to citizens and therefore have a particularly important role to play in the promotion of EU citizenship and citizens' rights.

Overview - EU Citizens' Rights and the Role of LRAs

EU citizens' right	Role of Local and Regional Authorities
<i>Right to vote and stand as a candidate in European Parliament elections in the Member State of residence</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registration of EU citizens would occur normally at municipal level; • Mobilising foreign residents, raising awareness about possibility for inscription in electoral roles and promotion of participation in European elections
<i>Right to vote and stand as a candidate in municipal elections</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registration and mobilising foreign residents, raising awareness of possibility of inscription in electoral roles and promotion of participation in municipal elections. • Forging a sense of local belonging through other measures
<i>Right of good administration: right to be heard; right to have access to the file; right/obligation of administration to give reasons; right to ask for damages if EU action has caused damages; right to receive response in official EU language.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Right applies directly to EU institutions and Member State authorities in the context of Art. 41 of Charter. • However similar obligations of good administration apply to Local and Regional Authorities by virtue of national law.
<i>Right of access to documents</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Right applies directly to EU institutions and Member State authorities in the context of Art. 42 of the Charter. • However similar obligations apply to Local and Regional Authorities by virtue of national law.
<i>Right to complain to Ombudsman</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information to citizens about possibility to complain to the Ombudsman; • Possibility that local/regional Ombudsman exist is linked to right to good administration
<i>Right to petition the European Parliament</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information to citizens about the existence of the right
<i>Freedom of movement and residence in the EU</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key to EU citizenship but also to functioning of the Internal Market • Local and Regional Authorities can have an important role in raising awareness and in facilitating the exercise of these rights.
<i>Right to diplomatic and consular protection</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information and awareness raising

Examples of Good Practices

There are a number of examples of how Local and Regional Authorities can promote EU citizenship and citizens' rights.

Example 1: Active citizenship – What is your approach? ‘Youth in action’ Programme

- The objective is **to help Youth Councils to develop the capacity to promote awareness-raising projects on European citizenship.**
- **Ten young delegates from France, Germany, Italy, Sweden and Turkey will take part in the project** along with two youth workers per organisation. The project will allow young participants to compare the operation of their respective structures and then draw up a practical guide for Youth Councils, and publish a booklet on their experience during the project's lifetime.
- During their stay in the partner cities, **groups take part in meetings of local and regional youth councils.** The youths of the host country present their citizenship projects explaining what they had to do to make them successful. Participation in the sessions of the various working groups is then followed by an exchange of views. After each meeting each youth group writes an evaluation report on a particular project. These evaluations serve as the basis for creating a practical guide for youth councils.
- This project is co-organised with the International Forum Burg Liebenzell (Germany) and the Agenzia per la promozione dei Giovani (Italy). The City of Gothenburg and the Civil Dialogue Association, Bursa (Turkey) act as partners in this project. The project is funded under the Citizenship programme of DG Education and Culture.

Example 2: ALL.4.EU: Citizens for Europe

- The project aimed to **promote awareness of EU citizenship activities through citizens' panels (e-panels) and active learning.** It was funded under the programme Action 1, Active Citizenship (measures 2.2) and included 22 partners from Albania, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Ireland, Italy, Macedonia, Malta, Romania, Slovakia and Spain.
- The programme raises awareness among the partners about **the importance of active citizenship as a multiplier for promoting a greater sense of ownership of the EU and European values.** The project provides training, information and cooperation opportunities in the framework of 'Europe for Citizens' that contribute to creating new partnerships and networks among different kind of stakeholders such as local authorities, civil society organisations and research centres.

ALDA relies on the partners in the project to disseminate their findings. They usually do this by organising campaigns about the programme as well as events and fairs on topics such as citizenship, notably during the **European Week of Local Democracy.**

Example 3: Being Citizens in Europe

- The project took place in 2009 and included partner organisations in Spain, Sweden, Lithuania and the UK. It was initiated by civil society organisations and aimed to **promote cooperation between European citizens** by discussing issues relevant to youth groups and to make long-term agreements between youth groups from partner countries.
- The project set up meetings to discuss European values and the possibility to carry out common projects. These meetings led to proposals for projects that aimed to **foster tolerance of other cultures, solidarity and elimination of xenophobia**. One meeting was held on European day, which allowed the Lithuanian and Swedish partners to carry out a quiz about Europe.
- The project gave partners an opportunity to get acquainted with each other's cultures, traditions, youth hobbies, and civic activities as well as to improve their foreign language skills. Many of the young people prepared projects for future activities and aimed to set up meetings with European citizens in other Member States.

Right to Vote in European Parliament and Municipal Elections

EU citizens have the right to vote in European Parliament and municipal elections held in the country where they live, whether they are a citizen of that country or not. They can also stand as a candidate in these elections.

European Parliament Elections

The Commission's *Report on the evaluation of the 2009 European Parliament elections* assessed the promotion of EU citizens' electoral rights in the 2009 European Parliament elections, including **the level of awareness of the election and electoral rights, the measures taken by states in regard to this, how Member States have transposed EU legislation in this area, and what has been done to improve participation.**

- The Report indicated that **voter participation in European elections** has steadily decreased since 1979. Although awareness of the EU campaigns encouraging people to vote was high (67%) the impact on turnout seems limited. The overall turnout level was just 43% in 2009.
- The Report also highlighted **the increasing numbers of EU citizens in Member States other than the one they hold nationality** who are enrolled to vote. Different measures have been taken by Member States to increase participation including sending letters to non-national EU citizens to inform them of the arrangements for exercising their electoral rights, to the same message appearing in advertisements in local newspapers, TV, radio, and on government websites.
- The Report also states that **on the whole legal conditions allowing EU citizens to exercise their right to vote and to stand as a candidate in the Member States of residence have been fulfilled**. Two Member States still have conditions which impose a obstacles to the exercising this right while a number of other Member States impose additional requirements on EU citizens.

Municipal Elections

The Commission's *Second Report on the Application of Directive 94/80/EC on the right to vote and to stand as a candidate in municipal elections by citizens of the Union residing in a Member State of which they are not nationals* found **that all Member States have**

transposed the Directive 94/80/EC requiring that every EU citizen be given the right to vote and stand as a candidate in municipal elections in the Member State in which he/she resides. Amongst the report's findings was that:

- The average percentage of EU citizens who are aware of their municipal electoral rights has almost doubled from 37% (2007) to 69% (2010). Member States have also adopted targeted measures to inform EU citizens of their electoral rights in municipal elections. However, municipal elections still generally have low turnouts, although slightly higher than those for European elections.
- In Member States where registration is not automatic, only an average 10% of resident non-national EU citizens asked to be entered on the electoral rolls. There was no data available on the percentage of the resident non-national EU citizens who actually voted after being entered on the electoral rolls.
- Some Member States incorrectly transposed the EU Directive and required that non-national EU citizens go through a minimum period of residence before gaining municipal electoral rights.

The findings of both of the reports are supported by statistics from the Flash Eurobarometer Report (292) on the electoral rights of EU citizens which indicated that in 2010, **69% of citizens 'are aware that non-national EU citizens may vote in municipal elections and 67% also correctly identify that electoral rights are provided in European Elections'**. These figures are up from 37% and 54% respectively in 2007. Respondents also declared that a 'clearer vision of the EU's role in their lives (84%) and better information on programmes, candidates (83%) and the elections themselves (80%) could boost their motivation to vote'.

Obstacles to Exercising Right to Vote in European and Municipal Elections

Strengthening electoral rights of EU citizens is one of the political priorities in the **Stockholm Programme**. The Committee of the Regions has recommended in its Opinion on the Stockholm Action Plan and as part of its political priorities for 2012 to consider giving EU citizens more extensive opportunities to take part in elections in their country of residence.

The European Citizenship Report and other studies provide information on levels of awareness amongst nationals of their European electoral rights. **CSES's survey focused on the awareness level of citizens of other Member States living in another country/region/municipality and their right to vote and/or stand as a candidate in European Parliament/municipal elections** as perceived by Local and Regional Authorities.

This survey, and several Flash Eurobarometer surveys, suggests a very mixed picture:

- The CSES survey suggests there is **no clear difference between awareness levels of nationals and people from other Member States living in their country** of their right to vote and/or stand as a candidate in European Parliament/municipal elections according to Local and Regional Authorities. Around 30% of the Local and Regional Authorities said there was a low level of awareness in the case of **both European Parliament and municipal elections** which contrasted with 27% who thought the awareness level was very or quite high in both cases.
- A slightly more positive view was presented in the Flash Eurobarometer Report (292). According to the report, **69% of citizens 'are aware that non-national EU citizens**

may vote in municipal elections and 67% also correctly identify that electoral rights are provided in European elections’.

- Furthermore, according to the Eurobarometer (EB/EP 77.4), 24% of citizens think that having the right to vote in all the elections held in the Member State where citizens live, even if not being a citizen of this Member State, would strengthen their feeling of being a European citizen.

Overall, it seems that EU citizens still face a number of obstacles with regard to electoral rights which are often linked to factors such as a lack of awareness of procedures, registration difficulties and language. However, there is evidence that legal conditions allowing EU citizens to exercise their right to vote and to stand as a candidate in their Member State of residence have been fulfilled. Moreover, Local and Regional Authorities in some countries have implemented measures to increase participation.

Role of Local and Regional Authorities

Local and Regional Authorities promote the EU citizens’ electoral rights through a range of interventions including educational initiatives and information campaigns. The EU-focused educational and interactive events for pupils promote EU electoral rights by engaging pupils and their parents in events, as well as creating a high level of awareness of voting rights in relation to the European Parliament and local elections. These measures are particularly successful in promoting electoral rights as they attract considerable interest from media organisations, schools, pupils, parents and NGOs.

Wider information campaigns and information-related events are also crucial to the promotion of EU citizens’ electoral rights. The most effective measures through which Local and Regional Authorities can successfully inform local and regional citizens about their electoral rights include those which engage citizens in an active dialogue with Local and Regional Authorities (for example, through conferences, workshops and brainstorming meetings). Information campaigns usually aim at much bigger target groups than more focused interventions such as events in schools.

Such measures could have a potentially big impact in increasing the number of registered voters in local and European elections. However, the measures are mainly implemented just before elections which leave long periods of time when little or no effort is made to promote awareness of EU electoral rights.

Examples of Good Practices

There are various ways in which Local and Regional Authorities promote the right to vote in European Parliament and municipal elections.

The first group of best practices implemented at the local and regional level relates to **information and awareness campaigns and projects targeting pupils at schools.** These projects are particularly important for the promotion of EU citizenship and citizens’ rights as they prepare young people to exercise their electoral rights in the future. The schemes seek to make young people, especially students, aware of their rights and the competences of the institutions which they are able to influence with their vote.

**Example 4: Classes to promote knowledge about EU integration among pupils
(Wroclaw, PL)**

- **Main Aims and Target Group:** The main aim of this scheme was to increase the awareness of young people between the ages of 12 to 14 about their civic duties to their "homeland" and to neighbouring countries, and to promote the idea of EU membership, including citizens' rights.
- **Description:** The classes also explained to young people how to participate in the public life in an integrated Europe. In addition, the campaign aimed to deepen the sense of belonging to Europe as well as establishing a connection between the pupils and their local community ("little homeland").
- **Impacts and Scope for Replication:** Although there is no information on the number of school children who have benefited from the classes, there is clearly scope for this type of initiative to be widely promoted by Local and Regional Authorities among other local and regional schools, encouraging teachers to take an active part in promoting EU citizenship and rights and cooperate with Commissions Contact Points in EU Member States.

The second group of best practices implemented at local and regional level to promote electoral rights, involves information campaigns/projects which aim to inform local but also non-national EU citizens about their right to vote or stand for local and EP elections and encourage them to actively exercise these rights.

Example 5: Information campaign to increase participation of Polish and Portuguese communities in the EP, and other elections (Merthyr Tydfil, Wales)

- **Main Aims and Target Group:** The campaign was a part of the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council's Equality Policy and aimed to open access to elections at local and European levels. As the County Borough has substantial Polish and Portuguese communities, with a Polish population of around 2,500 and a Portuguese population of roughly 800, these groups were targeted.
- **Description:** In an attempt to open up access to elections (both European Parliament elections and others) for these two communities, the County Borough Council has, since 2007, been providing information on upcoming elections in both Polish and Portuguese. The project's objectives were achieved with the help of the Glamorgan Gate project undertaken by the University of Glamorgan. Efforts include providing information on the elections in the local newsletter in both languages, running a telephone helpline in both languages and providing interpreters at the polling stations on the day of the election.
- **Impacts and Scope for Replication:** The project's main impact was to increase the participation of Polish and Portuguese communities in local and European elections. According to the project coordinator, there was a larger interest following the information campaign which encouraged Polish and Portuguese citizens to play a more active role in local politics.

Right to Free Movement and Residence

EU citizens have the right to free movement and residence in any EU Member State. Compared with other EU citizens' rights, there seems to be a relatively high level of awareness of the right to free movement and residence.

- Over half the Local and Regional Authorities responding to the CSES survey indicated that **awareness levels with regard to the right to free movement and residence** are either 'quite' or 'very' high.
- This was also confirmed by the Eurobarometer (294) findings in which respondents were most familiar with their residence rights as EU citizens - 89% knew they had the right "to reside in any EU Member State subject to certain conditions".
- According to the Flash Eurobarometer, regarding specific EU citizens' rights, the **best known were the residence rights**.

In the *Two years to go to the 2014 European elections*, Eurobarometer (EB/EP 77.4), the freedom to take up residence in another EU Member State is one of the leading factors that most strengthens citizens' sense of European citizenship (the others include a harmonised European social welfare system and recognition of national qualifications without further examinations).

Obstacles to Exercising Right to Free Movement and Residence

As with other EU citizens' rights, **lack of awareness of EU citizens' rights and lack of interest in exercising them are the key obstacles to exercising the right to free movement**. Overall, however, obstacles in relation to free movement and residence are perceived by Local and Regional Authorities as less serious than with the other EU citizens' rights.

The 2009 European Parliament resolution, "*Problems and prospects concerning European Citizenship*" suggests that **poor implementation of directives by Member States is also a constraint on free movement** and other EU citizens' rights. More particularly, the Resolution notes that "no Member State has yet fully and properly implemented the Free Movement Directive". It points out the need to make information on the Directive more widely available to local and regional authorities "which are the first source of information for many citizens and as it is at local levels where most problems and infringements of Union citizens' rights take place".

Role of Local and Regional Authorities

Although the views of Local and Regional Authorities vary, most recognise the need to do more to help foster a greater awareness of the right to free movement among citizens. Several types of schemes are seen to promote the right to free movement and residence. These include educational measures and other interventions such as awareness-raising events as well as cross-border schemes and town twinning projects. These schemes usually have very specific target groups – young people (i.e. students and/or workers), disadvantaged citizens, economic migrants, cross-border workers, and other EU nationals.

- **Town twinning** schemes help the participating parties to obtain more focused and concrete contacts and experiences provided by the town twinning partner. **Cross-**

border schemes are similar in nature with a focus on providing advice and practical support.

- Implementation of such measures sometimes helps to foster **new economic initiatives** within regions. Through a wider combination of Local and Regional Authorities and companies networking together, regional economic strategies can be improved. This, in turn, encourages cross-border mobility among workers in the region.
- **NGOs also play an important role in promoting the right to free movement and residence.** This is particularly so because of their role in implementing EU legislation in the areas of labour law, health and safety at work, gender equality and non-discrimination.

Some schemes are co-financed by the EU and organised within the scope the Europe for Citizens' programme, EUREG or/and INTERREG. These programmes provide a good opportunity for Local and Regional Authorities to promote their regions and cultures on a larger scale. There is scope for improvement with regard to the uptake of these types of programmes by them.

Examples of Good Practices

There are various ways in which Local and Regional Authorities promote the right to free movement and residence among EU citizens. Good examples include:

Example 6: Twinning project - youth training (Lille, Roubaix and Pévèle-Mélantois-Carembault, France)

- **Main Aims and Target Group:** The municipalities in the Nord-Pas-de-Calais area developed a European shared service for local public organisations. The aim was to raise awareness of European issues by organising training activities to convey information on European programmes and encourage the setting up of projects supporting the transnational mobility of young workers. The activities were directly promoted at local level and in local job centres. Around 160 youths living in the most deprived areas of the participating municipalities participated.
- **Description:** The service aimed to develop municipality-level organisations as contact points for businesses and other potential employers across the EU to help disadvantaged youths gain professional experience abroad and learn about a different culture but also to attract disadvantaged youths from other countries to benefit from professional experience in the Nord-Pas-de-Calais region.
This common service has contributed to the setting up of various projects in the context of a European mobility scheme whereby young Europeans can meet and exchange perspectives on various subjects relating to professional life. For example, in 2006 the Arras municipality organised a Franco-Polish exchange where young people were encouraged to exchange perspectives and ideas on their professional future on the themes of sport and leisure through team-building activities.
- **Impacts and Scope for Replication:** As a result of funding from the Regional Council of Nord-Pas-de-Calais, all of the local public organisations in the region benefited from assistance in setting up projects relating to European mobility. It also provided unique opportunity for Local and Regional Authorities' staff to receive training to set up similar initiatives. By providing information on the possibilities in different regions and EU Member States, the project also allowed Local and Regional Authorities to introduce different local groups to the right of free movement and residence.

The second group of best practices implemented by Local and Regional Authorities presents cross-border initiatives. These projects are particularly important as they offer different

channels for Local and Regional Authorities to encourage EU citizens to travel, work and study in others Member States' regions or municipalities. By creating effective information centres, networks and projects, Local and Regional Authorities are able to promote new opportunities and to more effectively address the interests and needs of local citizens.

Example 7: Different Views, Hexham Youth Initiative (Hexham, UK)

- **Main Aims and Target Group:** The project was run by Hexham Youth Initiative (a charity organisation working at the local level), and worked with groups of disadvantaged young people aged 13–19, encouraging them to become more involved in local and national youth projects and in European citizenship. The project aimed to give disadvantaged young people in Tynedale the opportunity to widen their horizons. There was an important European dimension.
- **Description:** The project included the development of cultural exchange opportunities including exchange visits to Europe. Hexham has organised a number of European Exchanges over the past 10 years including 2 exchanges to Seville between 2004 and 2007. These were funded by the Hexham Youth Initiative and co-funded by EU programme funding. The project shares information about opportunities for young people to get involved in the democratic process in Britain and Europe; and training of peer educators; and development of dedicated website. The project also set up the Work Away Programme, which sent young people to Italy, Poland and Sweden. This was funded through the Leonardo programme.
- **Impact and Scope for Replication:** Involving the local council in the project meant that young people were given an insight into how their local council worked and the people who worked for the council. Also consulting young people and providing feedback throughout the project meant that they felt more involved and that their views were valued. Support for the project was vital in allowing the young participants to exchange views and gain a stronger awareness of how local government functions and how they can influence decisions.

The third group of best practices implemented at the local and regional level, involves initiatives developed by Non-Governmental Organisations working at the local and regional level. These projects are particularly important, as in most cases they are initiated by local civil society groups and aim to include Local and Regional Authorities.

Example 8: Being Citizens in Europe (Skara municipality; Youth Council, Sweden)

- **Main Aims and Target Group:** The project took place in 2009 and included partner organisations in Spain, Sweden, Lithuania and the UK. In Sweden, Skara municipality Youth Council was involved in the project. It was initiated by civil society organisations and aimed to promote cooperation between European citizens by discussing issues relevant to youth groups and to make long-term agreements between youth groups from partner countries.
- **Description:** The project set up meetings to discuss European values and the possibility to carry out common projects. These meetings led to proposals for projects that aimed to foster tolerance to other cultures, solidarity and elimination of xenophobia. One meeting was held on European day, which allowed the Lithuanian and Swedish partners to carry out a quiz about Europe. The project gave partners an opportunity to get acquainted with other cultures, traditions, youth hobbies, and civic activities as well as improve their foreign language skills. Many of the young people prepared projects for future activities and aimed to set up meetings with European citizens in other Member States. Cost of the project was EUR 10,700.
- **Main Impacts and Scope for Replication:** The project was carried out from September 2008 to June 2009 (12 months). A number of participants are still contact with each other. The Skara municipality Youth Council considers the project to be one of the most successful

projects for sustaining communication among young participants and improving cross-border cooperation. Skara municipality expressed an interest in continuing the project activities for 2009-2010, but grant funding was not available. The lack of funding at local and regional level means that the scope for continuing activities such as workshops on citizenship with our local youth groups is limited.

Right to Complain to EU Ombudsman and to Petition the EP

Every EU citizen has the right to complain to the EU Ombudsman and to petition the European Parliament.

Complaints brought to the European Ombudsman include cases of lack of transparency, administrative irregularity, unfairness, discrimination and abuse of power, and will often relate to alleged infringements of citizens' rights as enshrined in EU law by the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

In the Annual Report 2011 of the European Ombudsman, it is pointed out that **over 22,000 individuals have been helped directly by the Ombudsman**. There has been a decline in the total number of complaints submitted to the Ombudsman for the third consecutive year. The figures have fallen from a peak of 3,406 complaints in 2008 to 2,510 in 2011, mainly because fewer people are complaining erroneously to the Ombudsman. They are instead finding the right means of redress the first time around.

With regard to **right to petition the European Parliament**, Article 44 of the **EU Charter of Fundamental Rights** stipulates that:

“Any citizen of the Union, and any natural or legal person residing or having its registered office in a Member State, shall have the right to address, individually or in association with other citizens or persons, a petition to the European Parliament on a matter which comes within the Union's fields of activity and which affects him, her or it directly.”

According to statistics provided in the Report on the deliberations of the Committee on Petitions during 2009, **the European Parliament received 1,924 petitions, a slight increase compared to the 1,849 submitted in 2008**. It could be assumed that such a small difference indicates certain stagnation after the constant ascending trend recorded following the 2004 and 2007 enlargement of the Union.

Obstacles to Exercising the Right to Complain to the EU Ombudsman and to Petition the European Parliament

As with the other EU citizens' rights, **lack of awareness and lack of interest** are also seen by Local and Regional Authorities as the main obstacles to making effective the right to complain to the Ombudsman and to petition the European Parliament. These findings are confirmed by the conclusions of the Special Eurobarometer. According to this, roughly half of respondents would like to know more about what the Ombudsman does, while the other half expressed little interest in learning more about the Ombudsman's role.

The European Ombudsman has two main challenges in terms of raising awareness: many people do not know what the EU Ombudsman is and they do not know what his competences are.

In the special Eurobarometer ‘European Ombudsman (75.1) from April 2011 it is mentioned that EU citizens who regard themselves as being informed about the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights show a much greater interest in learning more about the Ombudsman than people who say they are not informed about the Charter. The Report further pointed out **that only 14% of EU citizens consider themselves to be informed, either well or fairly well, about the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.** An important finding is that **a majority of respondents (52%) consider the Ombudsman’s most important function is to ensure that EU citizens know their rights and how to use them.**

The level of interest in the Ombudsman varies considerably between Member States, ranging from 74% of respondents in Cyprus who expressed an interest to 21% in Slovakia. A majority of respondents (52%) think that the Ombudsman’s most important function is to ensure that EU citizens know their rights and how to use them.

In regards to the right to petition the European Parliament, in its Resolution on the EU Citizenship Report 2010, the EP points out that even though the **right to petition** is expressly provided for in the Treaties, it is not sufficiently known or used, and therefore calls for improvement and active communication to EU citizens.

Role of Local and Regional Authorities

The research identified relatively few examples of measures being implemented by Local and Regional Authorities to promote the right to complain to the Ombudsman and to Petition the European Parliament. The case studies suggest that one of the ways to promote awareness about the right to complain to the European Ombudsman and the regional Ombudsman is to organise conferences and workshops with the representatives of the European Ombudsman’s office at a local level.

These types of projects have been organised by various Local and Regional Authorities and provide local communities with the opportunity to learn about the Ombudsman’s role. Events such as these also provided a platform to inform the public about the role and limitations of the Ombudsman (e.g. that the European Ombudsman can only deal with complaints concerning the EU administration and not with complaints about national, regional, or local administrations, even when the complaints concern EU matters).

Examples of Good Practices

Good examples of ways in which Local and Regional Authorities promote the right to complain to the Ombudsman and to petition the European Parliament include:

Example 9: European Ombudsman Visit

- ANCI **invited the European Ombudsman to Palermo for an event to raise awareness about his work** in June 2009. The aim of the exchanges was to provide a comprehensive overview of the rights of citizens to complain to the Ombudsman ‘citizen empowerment’ and of principles of good administration as well as the complementarities between local Ombudsman and courts.
- These visits were extremely valuable in terms of raising awareness about citizens’ rights under EU law, increasing the public profile of the European Ombudsman and his national counterparts, and providing information about the right to complain.

Example 9: EuroPetition Initiative

- **Main Aims and Target Group:** The EuroPetition project piloted the implementation of a trans-European Local Authority service providing distributed citizen engagement and interaction with the European Parliament's PETI Petitions Committee and the European Citizens' Initiative. EuroPetition aimed to create a simple and scalable process for petitioning to achieve increased participation of citizens in EU issues and/or cross-border issues among EU countries.
- **Description:** EuroPetition is a two-year **eParticipation Programme that piloted the coordination and submission of local e-petitions and cross-border pan-European EuroPetitions to the European Parliament** during 2010 from five regions working with clusters of 19 Local Authorities in Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and the UK, potentially involving over eight million citizens across the EU.
- Local authorities from the following countries took part in the project: Stockholm, Göteborg, Malmö, Linköping, Piteå (SE), Cordoba, Malaga, Abla (ES), Vicenza (IT) Hertogenbosch, Utrecht (NL), Birmingham, Bristol, Kingston, and North Lincolnshire (UK). The project has now drawn to a close and the network has continued on a self-funded basis since December 2010. The EuroPetition project was sponsored by the European Commission under EU eParticipation preparatory action.
- The open-source e-petitioner system was developed by Public-i from ITC's original system. The system supports coordination and submission of cross-border and pan-European EuroPetitions to local government and the European Parliament's Petition Committee. It showed how to strengthen and broaden citizens' participation in democratic decision-making and contribute to better legislation through applying the latest available innovative ICT.

Framework for Promotion of EU Citizenship and Citizens' Rights

Individual examples of good practices such as those cited above are helpful but can be more effective and achieve a greater impact if combined in an **overall strategy** implemented by Local and Regional Authorities. This allows synergies to be exploited, economies of scale to be developed, and expertise and know-how to be developed and shared. Moreover, if projects are packaged together as part of a strategy, interventions are likely to have a higher profile than they would if implemented individually.

The framework set out below draws on good practices identified through the research and wider experience. It consists of four main steps:

- **Step 1 – Baseline assessment** – to assess the current situation;
- **Step 2 – Development of strategy** – the measures to improve the situation;
- **Step 3 – Implementation framework** – how the measures will be implemented;
- **Step 4 – Monitoring and evaluation** – how progress will be measured.

It is recognised that Local and Regional Authorities generally have very limited resources to devote to promoting EU citizenship and citizens' rights given the constraints on budgets and other more pressing priorities associated with the economic downturn in Europe.

Step 1 - Baseline Assessment

It is important that any strategy to promote EU citizens' rights in a locality or region is based on an understanding of the current situation.

Setting a Baseline for Promoting EU Citizenship and Citizens' Rights

- **Target groups** - the main target groups in the region and where the population groups are concentrated geographically;
- **Existing levels of awareness and take-up** - the extent to which the different target groups are already aware of and exercising their EU citizens' rights;
- **Effectiveness of existing measures** to encourage people to exercise their EU citizens' rights, problems and shortcomings.

In all EU Member States, the target group for measures to promote EU citizens' rights is likely to consist of both nationals of the country concerned and non-nationals living in it who are nationals of other Member States. **Measures aimed at nationals** could involve general awareness-raising with few if any interventions aimed at specific groups (an exception could be young people). The main target group, however, is likely to be **non-nationals**, particularly in relation to the right to vote in EP and municipal elections, and here a more targeted approach is necessary.

Establishing a baseline for the extent to which the **right to vote in EP and municipal elections** is already being exercised should be quite straightforward to do from the turnout statistics for elections for different Local and Regional Authorities areas.

It may, however, be more difficult to determine the baseline in relation to other EU citizens' rights. On the **right to free movement**, official statistics may provide some indication of the extent to which different nationalities have exercised their right to move from one EU Member State to another. However, it will be difficult to determine from statistics alone what (if anything) was done in the originating area to encourage this right to be exercised because the number of outward migrants is unlikely to be monitored; from the point of view of the destination area, the number of non-nationals living and working in the area should, however, be known and will be an indication of the extent to which people have exercised their right to free movement. It may be necessary to go beyond the official statistics and undertake surveys of people who have moved into the area to identify the factors, including the role of Local and Regional Authorities and the effectiveness of measures that have been introduced in supporting people to move from one area to another.

In the baseline assessment, various **benchmarks** could be calculated such as the proportion of non-nationals voting in European Parliament and municipal elections compared with the voting population as whole. In addition to quantitative benchmarks, there could be broader qualitative comparisons between the situation of in the area with regard to the various citizens' rights and other areas.

Step 2 - Development of Strategy

Having undertaken the baseline assessment, the next step is to define the Local and Regional Authority's strategy to increase the awareness and the take up of EU citizens' rights. The strategy should set out:

Key Elements of a Strategy

A key part of the strategy should set out the **measures to promote EU citizens' rights** in the area. A distinction can be made between:

- **Baseline situation** – summarising the current situation with regard to the take-up of EU citizens' rights in the LRA area (see Step 1 above);
- **Target groups** - some interventions might be aimed at general awareness raising while others could be aimed at specific target groups;
- **Measures that focus on different EU citizens' rights** – voting in elections, mobility of labour, right to petition the European Parliament or to consult the EU Ombudsman. Some measures might combine the different elements, and different methods (awareness-raising, exchanges, etc.);
- **Implementation framework** – how the measures will be implemented, funding, key partners the LRA will work with, timeframes for achievement of targets, etc.

The baseline assessment should provide a basis for **setting targets** by comparing the current situation with various benchmarks. For example, if the baseline assessment establishes that 45% of those eligible to vote in the area are doing so in EP elections whereas the turnout in a neighbouring region is 65%, then a target could be set of achieving a similar result at the next elections.

To take another example, a region's universities might set targets for the proportion of foreign students they would like to attract from other EU Member States; or there could be a target to achieve a certain level of awareness (as measured in surveys) amongst local people of EU citizens' rights generally. To the extent possible, targets should be specific, attainable, measurable, relevant and timely ('SMART').

The **measures implemented by Local and Regional Authorities** are likely to involve:

- **EU-wide schemes** - some schemes originate at the EU level with a 'vertical' implementation path involving different levels of governance.
- **Local and Regional Authority-led schemes** - other schemes originate with Local and Regional Authorities themselves with a more 'horizontal' implementation pattern involving a range of local partners.
- **Schemes combining 'vertical' and 'horizontal' features** – many schemes combine elements from the two dimensions.

Examples of EU-wide schemes include the Europe for Citizens Programme which supports a wide range of activities and organisations (including Local and Regional Authorities and NGOs) involved in promoting active European citizenship, especially the involvement of citizens and civil society organisations. Other EU-wide programmes, although not directly focusing on issues related to EU citizenship, provide a useful base for promoting the right to free movement and residence. Such schemes include: INTERREG IV (cross-border programmes), the EURES programme, the Rights and Citizenship programme, ERASMUS programme, Leonardo da Vinci programme, Grundtvig and Comenius programmes. The research summarised in this document identified numerous examples schemes initiated and led by Local and Regional Authorities.

Step 3 - Implementation Framework

There are a number of actions involved in implementing the Local and Regional Authorities strategy to promote EU citizenship:

Key Steps in Implementation

- **Action planning** – the Local and Regional Authorities will have to convert the overall strategy into a number of specific actions, each with its own targets, budgets (if appropriate) and timeframes;
- **Preparation of information outputs** – some measures (e.g. an awareness campaign) may involve the dissemination of information, for example leaflets and brochures) and these will need to be prepared;
- **Partnership working** – is likely to be a key to successful implementation. Some measures to promote EU citizens’ rights are likely to involve different levels of governance (‘vertical’ partnerships) whilst others involve different types of partners within the Local and Regional Authorities area (‘horizontal’ partnerships). A combination of these dimensions is also of course possible, in fact desirable.

Using the strategy as an overall framework, the Local and Regional Authority should produce an **action plan** for each measure (if the strategy consists of a number of measures).

This should be a practical document, perhaps set out in the form of a matrix on 1-2 pages, that summarises for each measure what needs to be done, by whom and over what timescale, the desired outcomes/targets, budgets, etc. The action plan is likely to include the **preparation of information outputs** as one of the early actions although this may not be the case with some types of interventions.

Partnership working is a key to successful implementation of measures, enabling Local and Regional Authorities to leverage additional expertise and resources, to mobilise other networks for dissemination of information, and to reach target groups more effectively.

At a local and regional level, **key stakeholders** include: schools, universities and other educational establishments which have an important role in raising awareness of European citizens’ rights amongst young people, both in relation to their own nationals but also by virtue of the fact that universities often attract students from other EU Member States; the private sector is also an important local stakeholder – many larger businesses have expatriate workers, or want to transfer workers from one country to another, and their employers have a role – potentially at least – in helping to ensure that they take advantage of EU citizens’ rights, particularly in relation to mobility of labour; and last but not least, NGOs and civil society are also significant partners in the promotion of EU citizenship and citizens’ rights.

Ideally, Local and Regional Authorities should mobilise both **the ‘vertical’ and ‘horizontal’ dimensions** referred to earlier. For example, in the run-up to European Parliament elections, there could be an EU-wide awareness raising campaign which is implemented by EU27 national authorities but with Local and Regional Authorities very much in the lead with regard to certain aspects such as organising events the local dissemination of information. However, even with measures of this sort, working ‘horizontally’ with local partners (e.g. with other local authorities and NGOs within a region) is likely to be important to success. Other measures may be intrinsically more ‘horizontal’. For example, a Local and Regional

Authorities may implement measures that it introduces itself to encourage mobility in conjunction with local universities and private sector organisations in a region.

Steps 4 - Monitoring and Evaluation

The last component of a strategy to promote EU citizenship should involve on-going monitoring of the implementation of measure(s) to ensure that they are likely to achieve their targets. This is clearly not likely to be necessary if the measure has a relatively short duration and is one-off rather than involving a series of interventions.

Ideally, an evaluation should be carried out once the measure has been implemented to establish the extent to which it was successful in achieving its objectives. If the intervention has a relatively long implementation period, or consists of a series of interventions, then it could be that an interim evaluation exercise is justified to help determine whether corrective action is needed if the measure is under-performing against its targets.

1. Introduction

This document contains the final Report on the assignment “Study on the role of local and regional authorities in promoting EU citizenship and citizens’ rights”. The study was undertaken in 2012 for the Committee of the Regions by the Centre for Strategy & Evaluation Services (CSES).

1.1. Resume – Study Objectives

The purpose of this assignment was to examine the role Local and Regional Authorities (LRAs) can have in implementing and fostering citizens’ rights connected with European Union (EU) citizenship.

The assignment was also designed to help raise awareness among LRAs of their role. The Report focuses on the **electoral rights conferred through EU citizenship** and the **right to free movement and residence in the EU**. The **right to complain to the Ombudsman and the right to and Petition the European Parliament** are also considered.

Based on a review of existing material, a survey and a number of case studies, the Report analyses **patterns of citizens’ behaviour, the main obstacles** citizens are confronted with in exercising their rights as EU citizens and **examples of good practices** at the local and regional levels. It also presents a **critical comparison** of the different practices was also undertaken and a number of recommendations prepared for LRAs and the CoR itself.

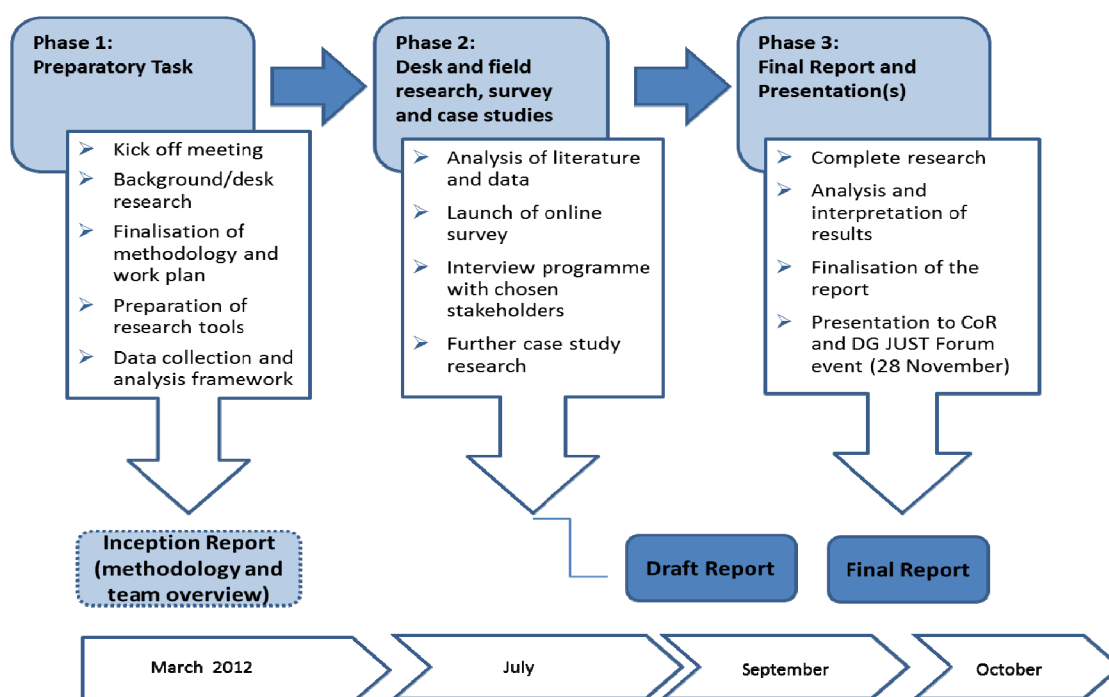
1.2. Research Plan

The study was carried out in three phases:

- **Phase 1: Preparatory task** – during this phase, background research was undertaken and the methodology for the study was further developed. A Preliminary Report was submitted in late March 2012 and discussed at a review meeting with the CoR in mid-April 2012.
- **Phase 2: Desk and Field Research** - further desk research concentrating on project level documentation, an online survey to collect information from national authorities, LRAs and others (e.g. NGOs) on promoting citizens’ rights and case study research involving follow-up interviews with selected contacts to examine key issues in more detail;
- **Phase 3: Final Report and Presentations** – completion of outstanding research and preparation of the final Report.

The following diagram summarises the methodological approach/timing that was adopted for the study:

Figure 1.1: Methodological Approach



Below, we provide further details on the main research activities.

Desk Research

A number of different sources of information were examined. This included the EU treaties which provide a base for citizenship of the European Union and the European Court of Justice’s case law; relevant policy documentation on EU citizenship and citizens’ rights, including the Citizenship Report, reports on municipal elections; reports regarding the 2009 European Parliament elections, available statistics on the elections (e.g. Flash Eurobarometer) the annual reports of the EU Ombudsman and reports regarding petitions to the European Parliament.

Phase 2 Survey

The Phase 2 survey focused on asking LRAs for information and views on their approach to promoting EU citizens’ rights and also best practices.

The survey questionnaire consisted of closed, multiple-choice questions and some open response options. The advantage of mainly closed questions is that this facilitates analysis of the survey results. Open questions are helpful in obtaining more detailed views on particular issues and in capturing project information in more detail. There were 166 ‘hits’ for the on-line survey of which 78 (47%) were completed sufficiently to be of analytical use. A breakdown of the survey responses by country and type of entity is provided at the beginning of Section 3.

Phase 2 Case Studies

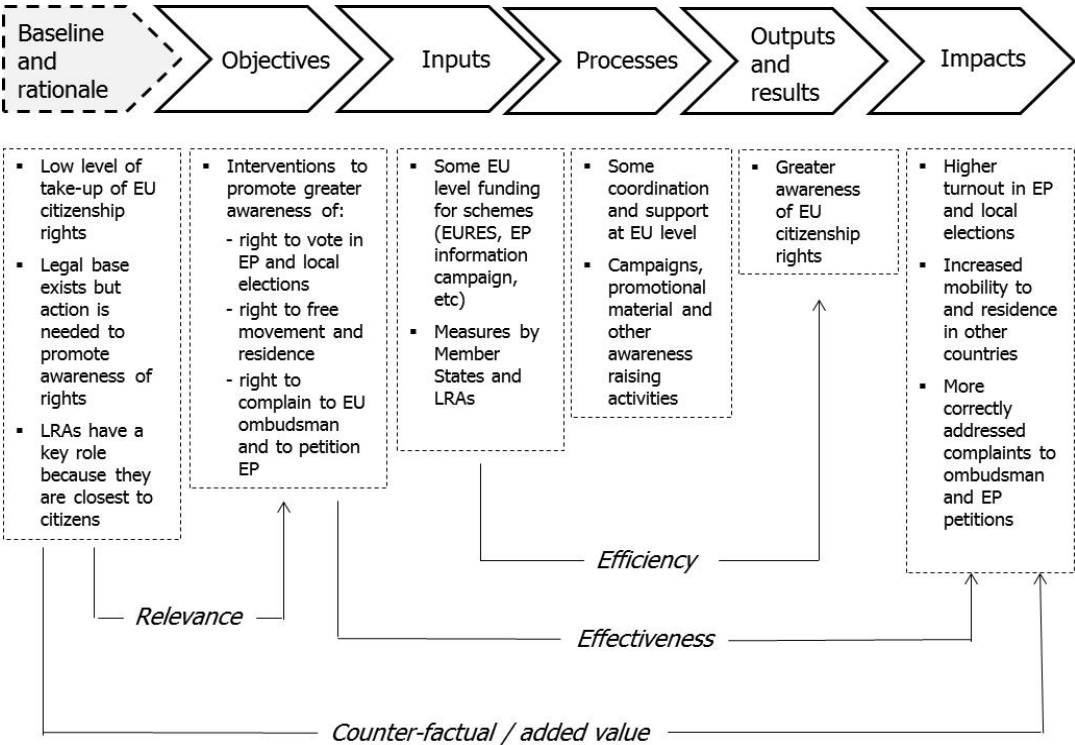
As part of the Phase 2 research, CSES carried out interviews to obtain further information on measures that demonstrated interesting approaches to promoting EU citizenship and citizens’ rights. This exercise led to a total of 34 case studies being completed. A breakdown by theme and country is provided in Section 3.2.

Last but not least, CSES also took part in the CoR conference "Local and regional authorities working to foster EU citizenship on the road to the European Year of Citizens 2013"(27 June 2012). The meeting was organised as a follow-up to the commitments made in the CoR Opinion on the EU Citizenship Report 2010 and in order to raise LRA’s awareness for and to maximise their input to the European Commission's public consultation and to the study.

1.3. Methodological Issues

An assessment of LRA measures to promote EU citizenship and EU citizens’ rights needs to be based on criteria that can be used to judge the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and added value of interventions. The conceptual framework that is used in Section 3 of this Report is outlined below:

Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework



In the above diagram, the key terms can be interpreted as follows:

- **Relevance** – the extent to which the measures are pertinent to the needs and priorities of promotion of EU citizenship and citizens’ rights.
- **Effectiveness**– whether the measures that have been implemented have helped achieve the key objectives of promoting EU citizenship and citizens’ rights, and if not, what needs to be done to improve effectiveness?
- **Efficiency**- how well expenditure on the measures has been converted into desired outputs and results; and value for money - are the outcomes achieved reasonable given the budgetary allocation (value for money), i.e. could more/better outcomes be achieved with the same financial inputs or could the same outcomes be achieved with reduced financial inputs?

- **Impacts and added value** – to what extent have the measures contributed to increasing the take up of EU citizens’ rights.

The diagram makes a distinction between outputs, results and impacts. Outputs in this context are the actions taken by LRAs to promote EU citizens’ rights (e.g. information campaigns and materials); results are the raised awareness of citizens, and impacts are the increased take-up of rights (e.g. higher voting in European Parliament and municipal elections, increased mobility, etc.).

1.4. Structure of the Report

This Report is structured as follows:

- **Section 2:- Background and Review of Existing Literature** - this section of the Report provides background information to the study, looking at different aspects of EU citizenship and EU citizens’ rights. It also provides an assessment of existing research and other material on the role of Local and Regional Authorities, and other key stakeholders, in the promotion of EU citizenship and citizens’ rights and also an overview of the main obstacles that they are encountering in exercising their rights.
- **Section 3: Survey and Case Studies** - this section presents an analysis of the survey responses and sets out examples of best practice case studies in the promotion of EU citizenship and citizens’ rights, as well as an LRA strategic framework.
- **Section 4 – Strategic Framework for Promotion of EU Citizenship** – sets out key actions for LRAs to promote EU citizenship and citizens’ rights.
- **Section 5: Conclusions and Recommendations** - this section summarises the main research findings, conclusions and recommendations.

2. Background & Review of Existing Literature

In this section, after providing background information to the study, we provide an assessment of existing research and other material on the role of Local and Regional Authorities, and other key stakeholders, in the promotion of EU citizenship and citizens' rights.

2.1. Background – EU Citizenship

The legal concept of citizenship of the European Union was formally introduced in 1993 by the Treaty of Maastricht. Every person holding the nationality of an EU Member State is also automatically a citizen of the European Union. EU citizenship does not replace national citizenship but provides all EU citizens with an additional set of rights that are guaranteed by EU treaties.

The European Court of Justice has also included the concept of EU citizenship in a number of its rulings. In the case *C-184/99 Grzelczyk*¹, the Court stated that EU citizenship is the fundamental status of nationals of the Member States, which enables those who find themselves in the same situation to enjoy within the scope of the Treaty the same treatment in law irrespective of their nationality. Accordingly, EU citizenship has enhanced individual rights significantly. Furthermore, in cases *C-413/99 Baumbast and R*² and *C-200/02 Zhu and Chen*³ the Court has underlined the right to free movement and residence in another Member State of EU citizens, therefore recognising EU citizenship as a source of free movement rights.

The new legislative features brought in by the Treaty of Lisbon (notably the citizen's initiative) have signalled a reinforcement of the status of European citizenship, which is now considered to be additional (and not merely complementary) to national citizenship. EU citizenship and citizens' rights are important to the fundamental rights of the individual, enabling everyone to receive equal treatment irrespective of their nationality.

A number of rights are attached to EU citizenship. These are set out in the Treaty (Article 20 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU), which underlines in Article 25 that new rights can be added with due respect to the legislative procedure. Many EU citizens' rights relate to mobile EU citizens who have exercised their rights of free movement and to reside in a Member State other than the one of which they are nationals (e.g. as workers, students or retired persons). But they also affect citizens that are moving for very short periods (students, trainees, frontier workers, weekly commuters, citizens travelling for business, tourists, patients, etc.). Other EU citizens' rights are not dependent on the mobility of citizens. However they tend to affect their lives to the extent in which local and European bodies function correctly, provide good assistance and services. Such rights include the right to good administration, the right to complain to the EU Ombudsman and the right to petition the EP.

¹C-184/99 *Grzelczyk* [2001] ECR I-6193.

²C-413/99 *Baumbast and R* [2002] ECR I-7091.

³C-200/02 *Zhu and Chen* [2004] ECR I-9925.

EU citizens' rights are now also enshrined in Chapter V of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights⁴.

European citizenship enables various national identities to coexist within the European Union regardless of the arrangements for conferring national citizenship. By involving citizens in the process of European integration, it helps to build European democracy, improve the transparency of EU actions and strengthens the process of European integration. LRA have an important role to play with regards to promotion of EU citizenship and citizens' rights. The EU citizens' rights, their legal basis and possible role of LRAs are set out in the table below:

⁴Charter of fundamental rights of the European Union, (2000/C 364/01)

Table2.1: EU Citizens' Rights and Possible Role of LRAs

EU right	Legal basis	Possible role of LRAs
Right to vote and stand as a candidate in EP elections in the MS of residence	20 (2) (b), 22(2) TFEU; 39 Charter	Registration of EU citizens would occur normally at municipal level – Role in mobilising foreign residents, raising awareness about possibility for inscription in electoral roles and promotion of participation in European elections.
Right to vote and stand as a candidate in municipal elections	20 (2) (b)' 22(1) TFEU; 40 Charter	Registration – Role in mobilising foreign residents, raising awareness about possibility for inscription in electoral roles and promotion of participation in municipal elections. Forging a sense of local belonging.
Right of good administration: - right to be heard; - right to have access to the file; - right/obligation of administration to give reasons; - right to ask for damages if EU action has caused damages; - Right to receive response in one of the official languages	20 (2) (d), 24 TFEU; 41 Charter	Right applies directly to EU institutions and MS authorities in the context of art. 41 of Charter. However similar obligations of good administration apply to LRA by virtue of national law.
Right of access to documents	42 Charter	Right applies directly to EU institutions and MS authorities in the context of art. 42 of Charter. However similar obligations of good administration apply to LRA by virtue of national law.
Right to complain to Ombudsman	20 (2) (d), 24, 228 TFEU; 43 Charter	Provide information to citizens about possibility to complain to the Ombudsman; Possibility that local/regional Ombudsman exist– link to right to good administration.
Right to petition the EP	20(2)(d), 24 and 227 TFEU; 44 Charter	Provide information to citizens about the existence of the right
Freedom of movement and residence in the EU	TFEU and articles and legislation about free movement and internal market. Also Treaty articles and legislation on judicial and police cooperation should be read in the light of citizens' rights; 45 Charter, 20 (2) (a)	Core of EU citizenship but also internal market – LRA can have an important role in raising awareness and in facilitating the exercise of these rights.
Right to diplomatic and consular protection	TFEU and recent proposals for legislation from the EC; 46 Charter, 20 (2) (c)	Information and awareness raising.

Given the political context and the role of LRA, the Report focuses on electoral rights conferred through EU citizenship and the right to free movement and residence in the EU. The right to complain to the Ombudsman and the right to petition the EP are also taken into account, notably with the view to the provision of information and possible networking structures between Ombudsman at the different levels of governance.

The launch of the European Citizens Initiative instrument⁵ in April 2012, the upcoming **European Year of Citizens 2013**, the planned **EU Citizenship Report 2013** and the **elections to the European Parliament in 2014** provide a window of opportunity for strengthening awareness and knowledge about the EU citizens' rights, both among citizens and public authorities.

2.2. Review of Existing Literature

A disparity still remains in the Member States between the applicable legal rules and the reality confronting citizens in their daily lives, particularly in cross-border situations. This section of the Final Report provides a view of existing literature with a thematic division of the available material on different EU citizens' rights.

2.2.1. Overview – main obstacles in exercising EU citizens' rights

The main problems arise when it comes to implementation of the European legislation by individual Member States and in adjusting national legal systems in line with new legislative features. There is a need to adopt measures that can ensure information and training on EU citizenship to overcome various obstacles (geographical, cultural, linguistic and technological) and information gaps, and to enable all EU citizens to fully enjoy their rights. There is also a need for Local and Regional Authorities to cut red tape in order to ensure efficient implementation of the European citizens' rights.

In the Report 'The *citizen and the application of Community law*' of 8 June 2008⁶, Alain Lamassoure (MEP), described **the barriers which EU citizens are facing when attempting to exercise their rights.** The Report described various administrative burdens and concluded that EU policies should be built around the rights and needs of EU citizens and deliver concrete results. It emphasised the problem of low awareness among EU citizens, which has a negative effect on exercising their rights.

2.2.2. Right to free movement and residence

The 2009 European Parliament resolution, "*Problems and prospects concerning European Citizenship*"⁷, published before the Treaty of Lisbon⁸, comments on the ways in which it might develop and the current barriers to such development. In general, it suggests that **poor implementation of directives by Member States has created problems relating to free movement and other EU citizens' rights.** It calls on the Commission to fund programmes

⁵<http://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/public/welcome>.

⁶<http://www.alainlamassoure.eu/liens/975.pdf>.

⁷ European Parliament resolution of 2 April 2009 on problems and prospects concerning European Citizenship (2008/2234(INI)); (2010/C 137 E/03).

⁸Treaty of Lisbon amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community, signed at Lisbon, 13 December 2007.

that will help LRAs inform their residents of their rights as union citizens, and points out the need for more effective information campaigns. It also calls on both Member States and LRAs to facilitate free movement, especially when it comes to practical and administrative issues. It calls for the training of local and regional civil servants dealing with intra-EU legislation in the basics of the EU legislation that applies to their area.

The resolution notes that “no Member State has yet fully and properly implemented the Free Movement Directive”. It points out the need to make information on this directive widely available to local and regional authorities “which are the first source of information for many citizens and as it is at local levels where most problems and infringements of Union citizens’ rights take place”.

A further source of information on the constraints is the *EU Citizenship Report 2010* which looks at **problems EU citizens have encountered in exercising the rights granted to them in the Lisbon treaty and earlier agreements**. It notes that “a gap still remains between the applicable legal rules and the reality confronting citizens in their daily lives, particularly in cross-border situations”. The Report identifies 25 obstacles and splits the problems faced by EU citizens trying to exercise their rights into four categories:

- **Citizens as private individuals** – problems include insufficient protection for those suspected of, and victims of, crime; taxation issues in cross-border situations (e.g. occasions of double taxation); slow and costly administrative procedures involved in the cross border recognition of civil status documents; and uncertainty over the property rights of international couples.
- **Citizens as consumers** – problems include “lack of awareness and insufficient enforcement of citizens’ rights when buying holiday packages”; and “absence of single consumer protection rules, lack of awareness about existing means of redress and insufficient means of redress”.
- **Citizens as residents, students and professionals** – problems include their free movement being hindered “by divergent and incorrect application of EU law and by cumbersome administrative procedures”; recognition of academic diplomas and professional qualifications following burdensome and uncertain procedures; and the challenge to workers’ mobility caused by the “coexistence of different social security systems”.
- **Citizens as political actors** - the low general turnout for EU elections, just 43% for the June 2009 direct EU elections. The Report notes that some Member States appear not to have adequately informed EU citizens about their “right to vote and stand as candidates in European elections”. Others require EU nationals from other member states to “fulfil conditions which prevent them from exercising voting rights under the same conditions as their own nationals”.

An important conclusion that the Report draws is that in many areas the lack of EU legislation is not the main reason why citizens are facing obstacles in the exercise of their rights. It identifies instead three main categories of actions required to eliminate these obstacles. These are:

- **Guaranteeing that citizens’ rights are fully enforced on the ground** by the Member States, e.g. properly transposing EU directives into national law;
- **Easing citizens’ daily life by making the exercise of individual rights simpler**, e.g. recommending good practices to reduce costs and administrative burdens;
- **Raising citizens’ awareness about their rights.**

The *Opinion of the Committee of the Regions on the “EU Citizenship Report 2010”* highlights **the importance of LRAs in promoting EU citizenship**. It notes the potential for European citizenship to help build European democracy and declares itself in favour of initiatives “capable of increasing citizens’ participation in the democratic process of the Union and contributing significantly to eliminating the EU’s democratic deficit”. In its Opinion, the CoR points out that the Report does not sufficiently take into account the need for action at LRAs to ensure efficient implementation of EU citizens’ rights”, as they are the closest to the citizens. Alongside the general aims of cutting red tape and raising awareness, the CoR also highlights the role of town twinnings, networks of cities and the Capitals of Culture programmes as ways in which LRAs can significantly contribute to building EU citizenship.

Also the Qualitative Eurobarometer study on *Cross-Border Mobility from August 2010*⁹ found that “more than half of the respondents had experienced some form of **administrative difficulty** after arriving in their new Member State”. It also found that the main contributory factors which served to exacerbate these administrative problems were:

- Citizens having difficulty understanding the administrative processes because of **language differences**;
- Local administration staff **not being aware of citizens’ rights**;
- Differences between the **social security systems** of Member States.

According to the Flash Eurobarometer (294) European Union Citizenship Analytical Report 2010¹⁰ regarding specific EU citizens’ rights, again the **best known were the residence rights**. A total of 89% believed that they had the right “to reside in any Member State of the EU, subject to certain conditions”. A similar percentage (87%) of respondents also knew they had “the right to petition the key EU institutions”, while 85% knew they had “the right to have the same treatment as a national in any Member State”. A lower proportion (68%) knew of their new right “to participate in a Citizens’ initiative, a request signed by at least 1 million EU citizens, inviting the European Commission to propose a new policy measure”.¹¹

In the *Two years to go to the 2014 European elections* Eurobarometer (EB/EP 77.4), it is pointed out that the factors that would most strengthen citizens’ sense of European citizenship are: a harmonised European social welfare system, freedom to take up residence in the country of their choice on retirement and to receive their pension there, and recognition of national qualifications without further examinations.

2.2.3. Electoral rights

The EP 2009 resolution on problems and prospects concerning European citizenship¹² emphasises the importance of the voting rights granted to all European citizens in European and municipal elections in generating a sense of belonging for non-nationals. It notes that the legislation in some Member States preventing non-nationals to join or found political parties damages this.

⁹http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/quali/5823_citizenship_en.pdf

¹⁰http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_294_en.pdf

¹¹http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/flash_arch_en.htm.

¹²Problems and prospects concerning European citizenship; European Parliament resolution of 2 April 2009 on problems and prospects concerning European Citizenship (2008/2234(INI)).

European Parliament elections

The Commission's *Report on the evaluation of the 2009 European Parliament elections* assesses the promotion of EU citizens' electoral rights in the 2009 European Parliament elections. This includes assessing **the level of awareness of the election and electoral rights, the measures taken by states in regard to this, how Member States have transposed EU legislation in this area, and what has been done to improve participation.** The Report notes that voter participation in European elections has steadily decreased since 1979. Although awareness of the EU campaigns encouraging people to vote was high (67 %) its impact on turnout seems limited. The overall turnout level was just 43%.

The Report also noted **the increasing numbers of EU citizens in Member States other than the one they hold nationality of**, as well as an increase in the number and proportions of such citizens enrolled to vote. The reasons it lists as to why non-national EU citizens do not vote in their country of residence include: the trend in the general population of decreasing participation in European elections; and a lack of awareness of political rights (improving but still an issue).

Different measures have been taken by Member States to increase participation. The Report states that best practices include sending individual letters to non-national EU citizens to inform them of the arrangements for exercising their electoral rights. It also notes that advertisements in newspapers, TV, radio, and on government websites are now widely used by Member States. As described later, similar practices are taking place at the local and regional level in EU Member States.

The Report also states that on the whole legal conditions allowing EU citizens to exercise their right to vote and to stand as a candidate in MS of residence are fulfilled. However, it does note that two Member States, namely Slovenia and Malta, still have conditions which impose a major obstacle to the exercising of this right while a number of other member states impose additional requirements on EU citizens.

Municipal elections

The Commission's *Second Report on the application of Directive 94/80/EC on the right to vote and to stand as a candidate in municipal elections by citizens of the Union residing in a Member State of which they are not nationals*¹³ found that all Member States have transposed the Directive 94/80/EC requiring that every EU citizen be given the right to vote and stand as a candidate in municipal elections in the Member State in which he/she resides. However it found also that there remain some obstacles to exercising this right.

The Report reported that the **average percentage of EU citizens who are aware of their municipal electoral rights has almost doubled from 37% (2007) to 69% (2010).** It pointed out that the Commission has contributed to informing EU citizens of their electoral rights through such programmes as the "Fundamental Rights and Citizenship". Several Member States have also adopted targeted measures to inform EU citizens of their electoral rights in municipal elections. However, municipal elections still generally have low turnouts, although slightly higher than those for European elections.

The Report noted that **in Member States where registration is not automatic, only an average of 10% of resident non-national EU citizens asked to be entered on the electoral**

¹³http://ec.europa.eu/justice/citizen/files/com_2012_99_municipal_elections_en.pdf

rolls. It commented, however, that there was no data available on the percentage of the resident non-national EU citizens who actually voted after being entered on the electoral rolls. It found also that some Member States incorrectly transposed the EU Directive and required that non-national EU citizens go through a minimum period of residence before gaining municipal electoral rights. It is pointed out in the Report that there is a need to increase the level of information; to promote the exchange of best practices among the Member States; and to involve more intensively the LRAs in all the initiatives aiming at enhancing the effective exercise of the electoral rights.

The findings of both of the reports are supported by statistics from the Flash Eurobarometer Report (292) on the electoral rights of EU citizens which indicated that in 2010, **69% of citizens ‘are aware that non-national EU citizens may vote in municipal elections and 67% also correctly identify that electoral rights are provided in European Elections’.** These figures are up from 37% and 54% respectively in 2007. Respondents also declared that a ‘clearer vision of the EU’s role in their lives (84%) and better information on programmes, candidates (83%) and the elections themselves (80%) could boost their motivation to vote’.

Strengthening electoral rights of citizens has been set out as one of the political priorities in the Stockholm Programme.¹⁴ The CoR has recommended in its Opinion on the Stockholm Action Plan¹⁵ to consider giving EU citizens more extensive opportunities to take part in elections in their country of residence, and as part of its political priorities for 2012. In its Opinion the CoR also underlines that it remains committed to contributing to the full delivery of the objectives of the Stockholm Programme and Action Plan.¹⁶

2.2.4. Right to complain to Ombudsman and right to petition the European Parliament

Complaints brought to the European Ombudsman include cases of lack of transparency, administrative irregularity, unfairness, discrimination and abuse of power, and will often relate to alleged infringements of citizens’ rights as enshrined in EU law by the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

In the Annual Report 2011 of the European Ombudsman, it is pointed out that **over 22,000 individuals have been helped directly by the Ombudsman.** There has been a decline in the total number of complaints submitted to the Ombudsman for the third consecutive year. The figures have gone from a high of 3,406 complaints in 2008 to 2,510 in 2011, mainly because fewer people are complaining erroneously to the Ombudsman. They are instead finding the right means of redress the first time around.

However, the European Ombudsman has two main challenges in terms of raising awareness: many people do not know what an Ombudsman is and do not know its competences.¹⁷

In the special Eurobarometer ‘European Ombudsman (75.1) from April 2011 it is mentioned that EU citizens who regard themselves as being informed about the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights show a much greater interest in learning more about the Ombudsman

¹⁴ COM(2010) 171 final.

¹⁵ CdR 170/2010 fin.

¹⁶ CdR 361/2011 fin.

¹⁷ <http://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/en/resources/historicaldocument.faces/en/10348/html.bookmark>.

than people who say they are not informed about the Charter. The Report further pointed out **that only 14% of EU citizens consider themselves to be informed, either well or fairly well, about the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.**

An important finding of the study is that **a majority of respondents (52%) consider the Ombudsman's most important function is to ensure that EU citizens know their rights and how to use them.**

With regard to **right to petition the European Parliament**, Article 44 of the Charter¹⁸ stipulates that:

“Any citizen of the Union, and any natural or legal person residing or having its registered office in a Member State, shall have the right to address, individually or in association with other citizens or persons, a petition the European Parliament on a matter which comes within the Union's fields of activity and which affects him, her or it directly.”

According to statistics provided in the Report on the deliberations of the Committee on Petitions during the year 2009, the European Parliament received 1,924 petitions, a slight increase compared to the 1,849 submitted in 2008. It could be assumed that such a small difference indicates certain stagnation after the constant ascending trend recorded following the 2004 and 2007 enlargement of the Union. In its Resolution on the EU Citizenship Report 2010, the European Parliament¹⁹ points out that even though the **right to petition** is expressly provided for in the Treaties, it is not sufficiently known or used, and therefore calls for improvement and active communication to EU citizens.

2.2.5. Action taken to promote EU citizens' rights

The European Commission's Report, *On Progress towards Effective EU citizenship 2007 – 2010*²⁰, lists some of the actions taken by the Commission to help promote EU citizens' rights. These include **providing guidance to the Member States on implementation of EU legislation, bilateral meetings with national authorities, and improving citizens' access to information with the new 'Your Europe' web portal.** Financial Programmes supported include: “Europe for Citizens” (€215 million), “Fundamental Rights and Citizenship” (€93.8 million), and the “Seventh Research Framework Programme's Thematic Programme ‘Socio-economic Science and Humanities’” which has €125 million of its budget devoted to “The Citizen in the European Union”.

In May 2012, the Commission launched a public **online consultation on EU citizenship** to ask citizens and organisations about obstacles they encounter in their daily lives when seeking to exercise their EU citizens' rights.

In the CoR CIVEX Commission's 2012 work programme an emphasis is put on the role of LRAs in mobilising citizens and fostering active citizenship at European, national, regional and local levels. To this effect it will coordinate the CoR efforts in the context of the preparation of the European Year of the Citizen.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ European Parliament resolution of 29 March 2012 on the EU Citizenship Report 2010: Dismantling the obstacles to EU citizens' rights.

²⁰ http://ec.europa.eu/justice/citizen/files/com_2010_602_en.pdf.

In the Resolution on the priorities of the Committee of the Regions for 2013 in view of the Work Programme of the European Commission²¹, the CoR underlines the need to focus on the local and regional dimension of initiatives to strengthen citizens' rights. The CoR also explains its contribution to the Commission activities planned in the framework of the European Year of Citizens 2013. It also commits to contributing to the following-up of European Citizens' initiatives in cooperation with the other EU institutions.

Also in its **2012 Opinion on Financial Instruments for Justice and Citizenship**²², the CoR underlines the need to involve LRAs in implementing the future Europe for Citizens and Rights and Citizenship programmes. The Opinion points out, with particular regard to the programme, that involvement in town twinning schemes has resulted in extremely valuable exchanges of experiences between communities in different geographical areas, strengthening experimentation with successful initiatives through which authorities have also put themselves forward as promoters and facilitators of citizenship. It also suggests the possibility that all public bodies, including LRAs, could have access to the programmes.

The CoR also prepares an **own-initiative Opinion on Strengthening EU citizenship: Promotion of EU citizens' electoral rights**.²³ This Opinion seeks to contribute to the promotion of EU citizenship and citizens' rights, in particular by focusing on the right enshrined in the Lisbon Treaty for EU citizens to vote and stand as candidates in municipal elections and in elections to the European Parliament.

2.2.6. Conclusions

The **Citizenship Report 2010** and the accompanying reports on progress towards EU citizenship, and the **evaluation of the 2009 European Parliament elections**, showed there are still a number of obstacles to fully exercising EU citizens' rights. These obstacles affect citizens as private individuals, as consumers, as residents, students and professionals, and as political actors.

At the root of the problem is a lack of easily accessible information and assistance to citizens, while citizens themselves are not aware of the meaning of EU citizenship. While overcoming some of these obstacles depends on correct transposition in national legislation of EU law or on new legislative action, there is also **scope for LRAs to foster awareness of rights connected to EU citizenship** and to correctly implement adopted legislation.

Turning to the various EU citizens' rights, it has been observed that **voter participation in European elections has decreased since 1979**. Two major reasons that have been suggested to explain why non-national EU citizens do not vote in their country of residence are: the trend in the general population of decreasing participation in European elections; and a lack of awareness of political rights. In summary, there is evidence that **legal conditions allowing EU citizens to exercise their right to vote and to stand as a candidate in Member State of residence are fulfilled**. LRAs in some countries have implemented measures to increase participation (i.e. sending individual letters to non-national EU citizens to inform them of the arrangements for exercising their electoral rights, placing advertisements in newspapers, TV,

²¹Resolution on the priorities of the committee of the regions for 2013 in view of the Work Programme of the European Commission, July 2012; CdR 1031/2012.

²²CdR 13/2012.

²³CIVEX-V/036.

radio and community websites). However, major obstacles remain in some Member States to the exercising of electoral rights for EU citizens such as additional voting requirements.

Similarly, it is not clear that the right for EU citizens to vote and stand as candidates in municipal elections is being implemented at a practical level in some Member States. However, there is evidence that EU citizens are increasingly aware of their municipal electoral rights (in 2010, 69% of the surveyed citizens said they were aware of this right). **A limited number of complaints have been brought before the Ombudsman**, which often related to alleged infringements of citizens' rights under the European Charter of Fundamental Rights. This could be perceived as a positive outcome of activities taken by the European and Regional Ombudsman, as fewer citizens complain. However, there is still a lack of awareness among EU citizens about their right to complain to the Ombudsman.

With regard to **the right under the Treaty of Lisbon to petition the European Parliament**, the main areas of concern to EU citizens include the environment, fundamental rights, justice and internal market. However, there is a concern that the number of petitions submitted to the European Parliament is stagnating and that this indicates a lack of awareness among EU citizens about their rights.

3. Survey Analysis & Case Studies

In this section we present an analysis of the survey responses obtained and examine a number of examples of best practice in the promotion of EU citizenship and citizens' rights.

3.1. Analysis of Survey Responses

There were 166 'hits' for the on-line survey of which 78 (47%) were completed sufficiently to be of analytical use.

Table 3.1: Breakdown of survey 'hits' by country

Country	N°	%	Country	N°	%
Austria	6	3.6	Lithuania	2	1.2
Belgium	6	3.6	Malta	2	1.2
Bulgaria	3	1.8	Netherlands	1	0.6
Croatia	5	3.0	Poland	19	11.4
Czech Rep.	2	1.2	Portugal	2	1.2
Denmark	1	0.6	Romania	6	3.6
Estonia	2	1.2	Spain	50	30.1
France	5	3.0	Sweden	1	0.6
Germany	21	12.7	UK	9	5.4
Greece	1	0.6	Not given	13	7.8
Ireland	2	1.2			
Italy	7	4.2	Total	166	100.0

Table 3.2: Survey response rate by country

Country	N°	%	Country	N°	%
Austria	4	5.1	Latvia	0	0.0
Belgium	1	1.3	Lithuania	2	2.6
Bulgaria	1	1.3	Luxembourg	0	0.0
Croatia	4	5.1	Malta	1	1.3
Cyprus	0	0.0	Netherlands	0	0.0
Czech Rep.	1	1.3	Poland	12	15.4
Denmark	1	1.3	Portugal	1	1.3
Estonia	2	2.6	Romania	4	5.1
Finland	0	0.0	Slovakia	0	0.0
France	1	1.3	Slovenia	0	0.0
Germany	7	9.0	Spain	24	30.8
Greece	1	1.3	Sweden	1	1.3
Hungary	0	0.0	UK	5	6.4
Ireland	1	1.3			
Italy	4	5.1	Total	78	100.0

The largest number of completed responses came from Spanish respondents (30.8%), followed by Poland (15.4%). There were no responses at all from eight countries: Cyprus, Finland, Hungary, Latvia, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Slovakia and Slovenia. The bias

towards Spanish and Polish survey responses should be borne in mind when looking at the following analysis of the survey results. In carrying out the survey, CSES obtained inputs from a number of LRAs and also received the support of the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (FEMP). We would like to thank all those who provided inputs and assistance.

The majority of respondents (76.9%) represented local or regional authorities, with a further 15.4% representing Non-Governmental Organisations. As shown in Table 3.4, a high proportion of respondents were municipal organisations.

Table 3.3: Response rate by organisation

Options	N°	%
National authority	1	1.3
Local or regional authority	60	76.9
Network	0	0.0
Non-Governmental Organisation	12	15.4
European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation	0	0.0
Other	5	6.4
Total	78	100.0

Table 3.4: Response rate by level of operation

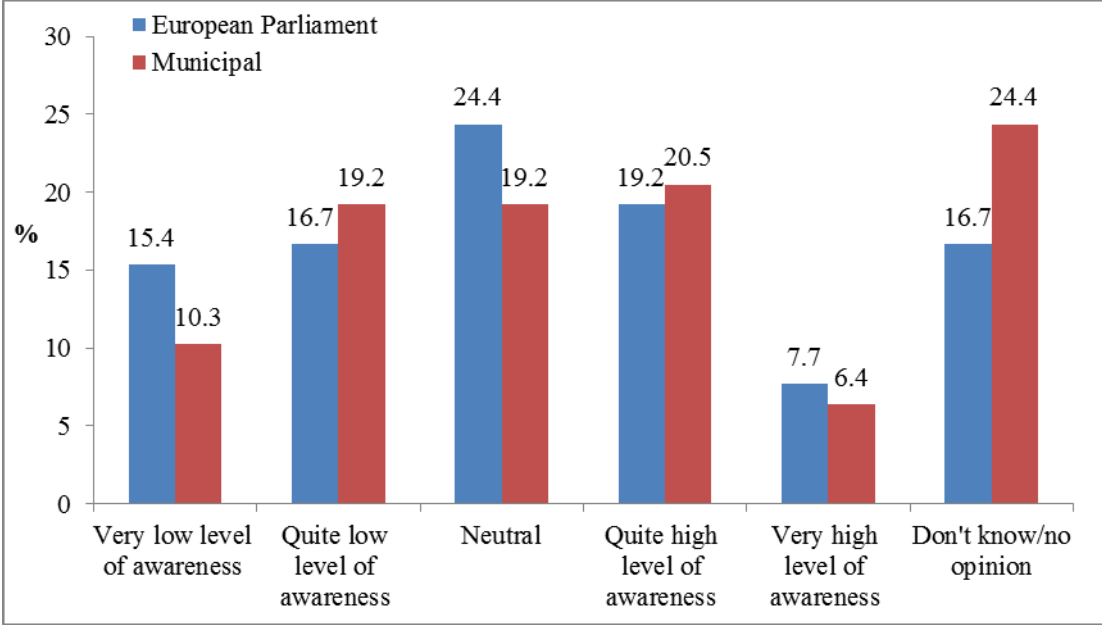
Options	N°	%
National	8	10.3
Regional	9	11.5
Municipal	56	71.8
Other	5	6.4
Total	78	100.0

3.1.1. Electoral Rights

The European citizenship Report and other studies provide information on levels of awareness amongst nationals of their European electoral rights. Our survey focused on the awareness level of citizens of other Member States living in another country/ region/municipality of their right to vote and/or stand as a candidate in European Parliament / municipal elections as perceived by public authorities or organisations.

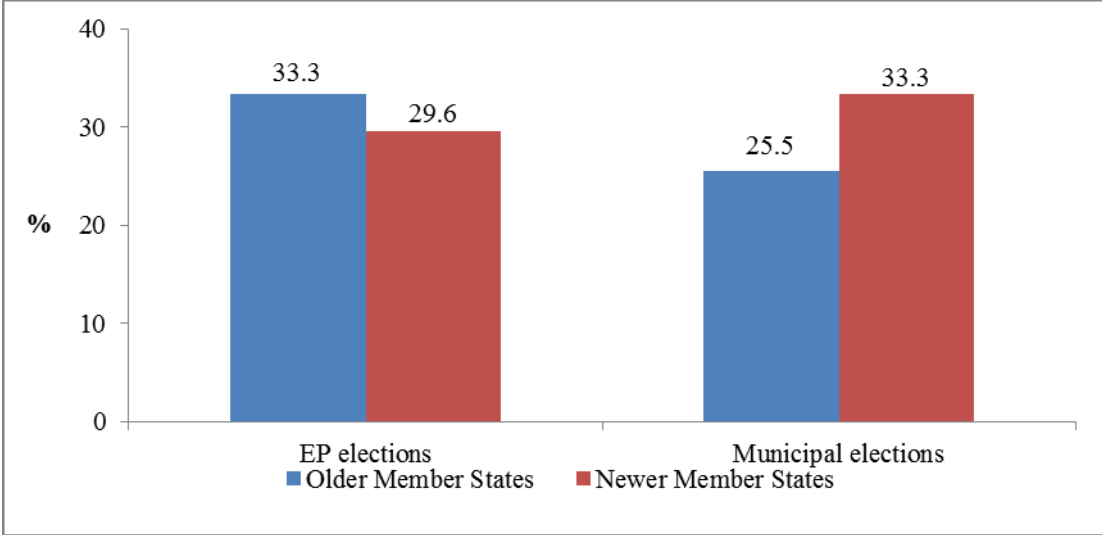
There is a very mixed picture. The figure below shows no clear difference when it comes to the view of respondents on awareness level of citizens of other Member States living in their country/ region/municipality of their right to vote and/or stand as a candidate in European Parliament / municipal elections. Around 30% said there was a low level of awareness in the case of both EP and municipal elections, whilst 26.9% thought the level was very or quite high in the case of both EP and municipal elections.

Figure 3.1: In your view, how aware are citizens of other Member States of their right to vote and/or stand as a candidate in European Parliament / municipal elections?



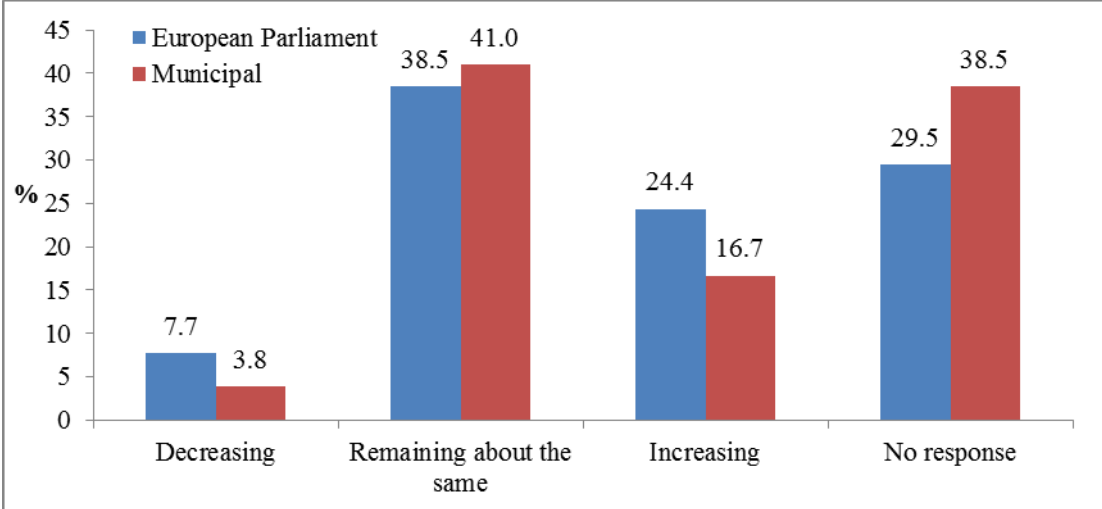
Further analysis suggests that LRA respondents in the ‘older’ Member States are less positive regarding awareness of the right to vote in European Parliament elections (33.3% saying there was very/quite low level of awareness) than in municipal elections (25.5%). The opposite is true with municipal elections.

Figure 3.2: Cross tabulation by older/newer Member States - Awareness of citizens of other Member States of their right to vote and/or stand as a candidate in European Parliament / municipal elections (very/quite low level of awareness)



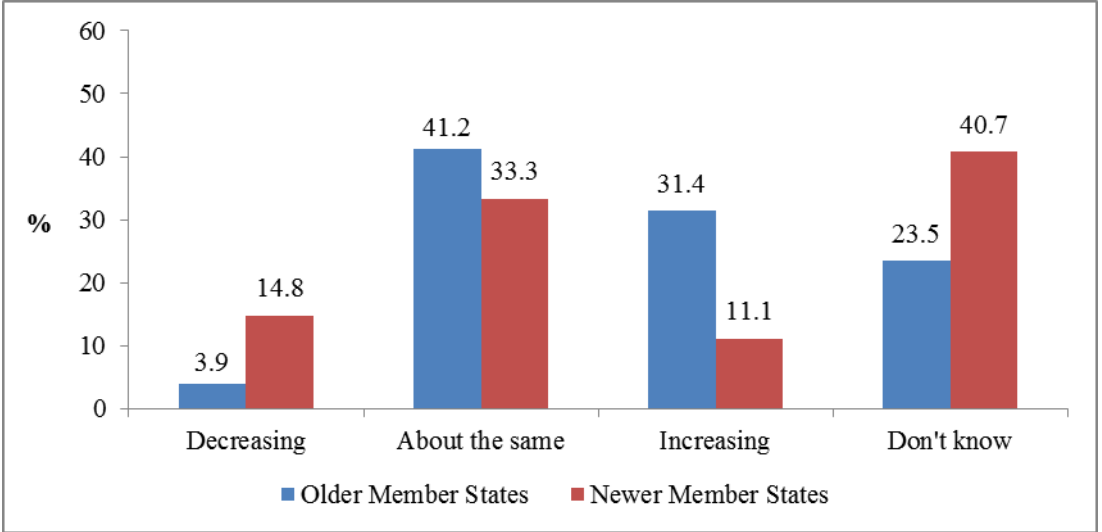
Taking the past few elections, LRA respondents were asked about the trend in citizens of another Member State voting in elections. Whilst around 40% said that the voting levels remained the same, nearly a quarter (24.4%) said there was an increasing turnout for European Parliament elections and 16.7% said it was increasing for municipal elections.

Figure 3.3: Proportion of citizens of another Member State voting in European Parliament/ municipal elections



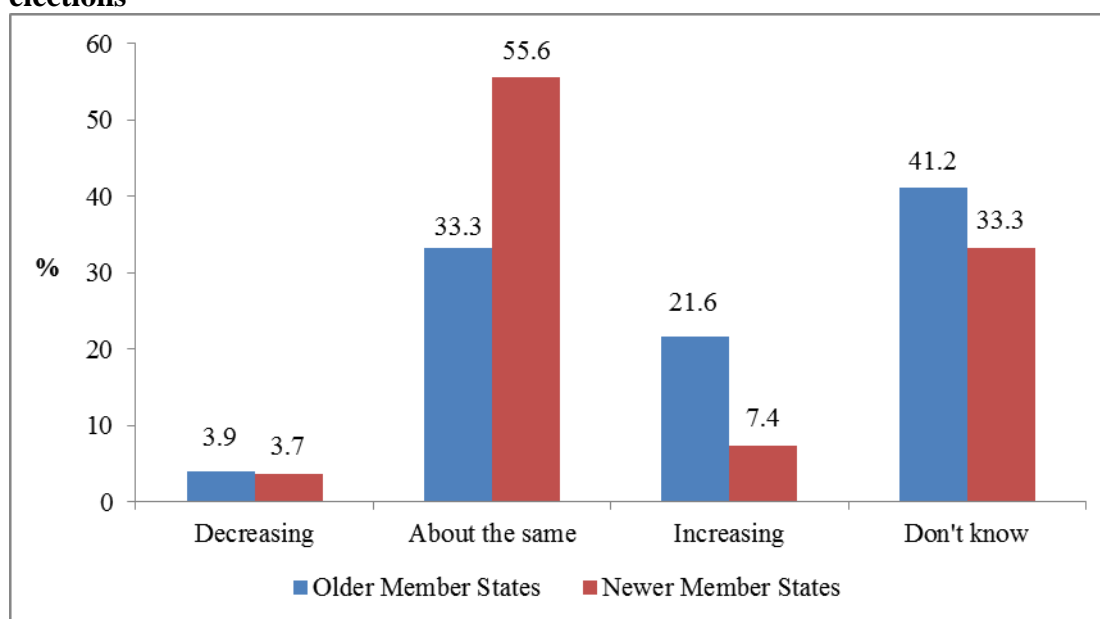
On European Parliament elections, further examination of the responses found that ‘newer’ EU 12+2 Member States are significantly less positive regarding voting trends than respondents in ‘older’ Member States. Nearly a third (31.4%) of ‘older’ Member State LRA respondents felt there was an increasing trend, compared with only 11.1% of the respondents in the ‘newer’ Member States.

Figure 3.4: Cross tabulation by older/newer Member States – voting trends in European Parliament elections



Compared to the European Parliament elections, where a large proportion (40.7%) had no opinion on the position, LRAs in newer Member States were more positive when it came to municipal elections with 63% saying the trend with regard to voting either remained the same or was increasing. LRA respondents from older Member States were less inclined to give an opinion on municipal elections. However, 21.6% of the LRAs felt the voting trend was on the increase.

Figure 3.5: Cross tabulation by older/newer Member States – voting trends in municipal elections



A slightly more positive view was presented in the Flash Eurobarometer Report (292) which measured citizens' opinion.

According to the Report, 69% of citizens 'are aware that non-national EU citizens may vote in municipal elections and 67% also correctly identify that electoral rights are provided in European Elections'. It was underlined that a 'clearer vision of the EU's role in their lives (84%) and better information on programmes, candidates (83%) and the elections themselves (80%) could boost their motivation to vote'.

Lack of interest in exercising EU citizens' rights was cited by 44.9% of the LRA respondents as a very or quite significant obstacle to making effective the right that citizens living in a Member State, other than their own, have to vote and stand as a candidate in municipal and/or European Parliament elections. Lack of awareness of rights was given as the next most significant factor, with a third saying this. Problems with language was also suggested as a very significant hindrance.

Table 3.5: Main obstacles to making effective the right that citizens of other EU Member States have to vote and stand as a candidate in municipal and/or European Parliament elections?

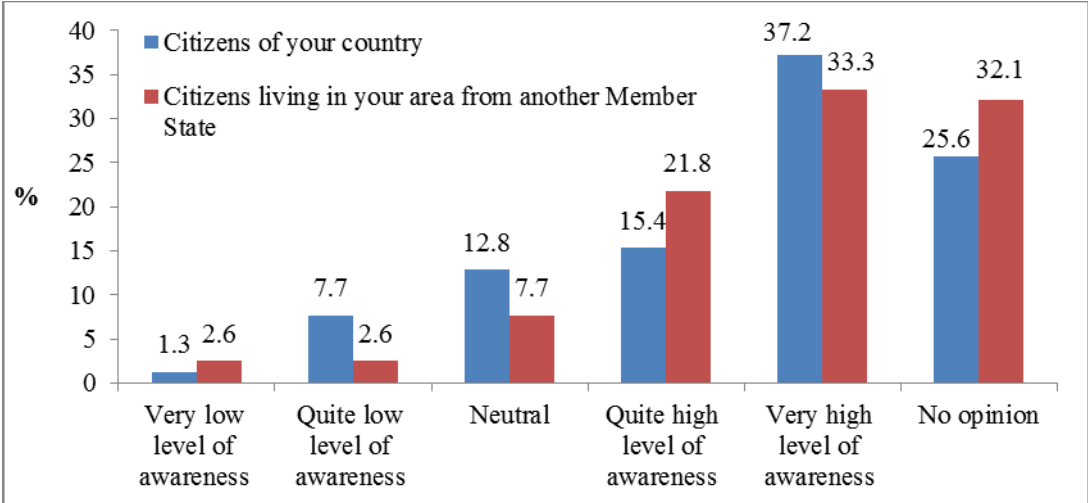
Options	There are no obstacles		Not significant at all		Not very significant		Neutral		Quite significant		Very significant indeed		Don't know/ no opinion		Total	
	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%
Lack of awareness of rights	11	14.1	8	10.3	11	14.1	11	14.1	14	17.9	12	15.4	11	14.1	78	100
Lack of interest in exercising rights	11	14.1	2	2.6	5	6.4	15	19.2	18	23.1	17	21.8	10	12.8	78	100
Legal framework not (fully) in place	11	14.1	29	37.2	12	15.4	5	6.4	4	5.1	4	5.1	13	16.7	78	100
Administrative complications	11	14.1	17	21.8	14	17.9	11	14.1	6	7.7	5	6.4	14	17.9	78	100
Other factors	11	14.1	5	6.4	2	2.6	1	1.3	1	1.3	3	3.8	55	70.5	78	100

According to the Eurobarometer (EB/EP 77.4)²⁴, 24% of EU citizens think that having the right to vote in all the elections held in the Member State where citizens live, even if not being a citizen of this Member State, would strengthen their feeling of being a European citizen.

3.2. Right to Free Movement and Residence

Compared with other EU citizens’ rights, there seems to be a relatively high level of awareness of the right to free movement and residence. Over half the LRA responding to the survey indicated that awareness levels are either ‘quite’ or ‘very’ high. This is also confirmed by the Eurobarometer (294)²⁵ findings in which respondents were most familiar with their residence rights as EU citizens - 89% knew they had the right “to reside in any EU Member State subject to certain conditions”.

Figure 3.7: How aware are citizens in your country/region/municipality of their right to free movement and residence in the EU?



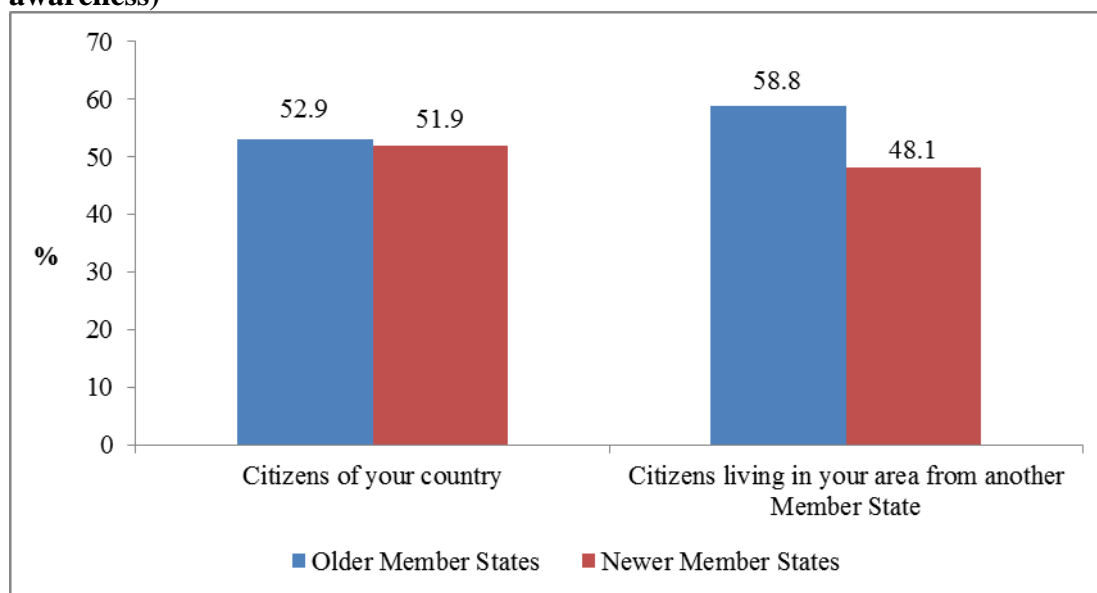
As can be seen, there is little difference between the awareness of citizens living in their own country and those from another Member State of the right to free movement and residence. The survey respondents indicated that there was a very or quite high awareness in 52.6% of native citizens and 55.1% of citizens from another Member State. However, a fairly high proportion of respondents offered no opinion on this matter.

A cross-tabulation of the survey results by older and newer EU Member States is shown below. Just over half of LRAs in both the older and newer Member States indicated that citizens of their own countries have a ‘very’ or ‘quite’ high level of awareness of the right to free movement. The position is somewhat different in relation to citizens from other countries, perhaps because ‘older’ Member States have generally higher proportions of citizens from other countries living and working in them than the ‘newer’ Member States.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

Figure 3.8: Cross tabulation by older/newer Member States – Awareness of citizens of their right to free movement and residence in the EU (very/quite high level of awareness)



As Table 3.6 shows, lack of awareness of EU citizens' rights and lack of interest in exercising them are again the key obstacles to exercising the right to free movement. Overall, however, obstacles in relation to free movement and residence are perceived by LRAs as less serious than with the other EU citizens' rights. Again language difficulties are seen as a significant factor.

One LRA respondent commented: 'The right to free movement is generally known in our country. *In travel or long-term stays, it is more the role of ignorance and fear of another foreign language and the financial cost of residence in a foreign country*'. (translation)

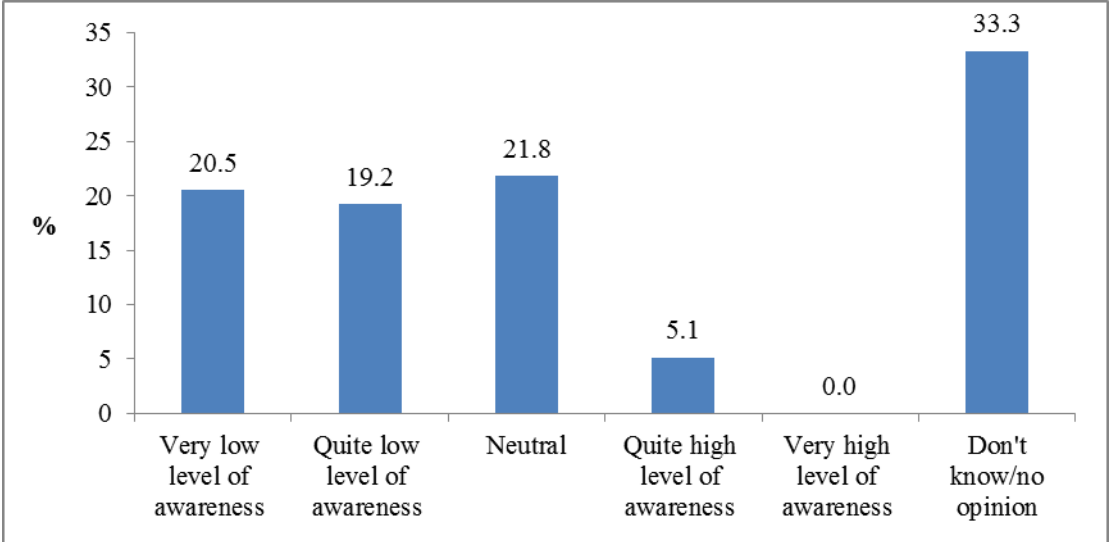
Table 3.6: What are the main obstacles in your country and region/municipality to making effective the right that citizens of other EU Member States have to free movement and residence?

Options	There are no obstacles		Not significant at all		Not very significant		Neutral		Quite significant		Very significant indeed		Don't know/ no opinion		Total	
	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%
Lack of awareness of rights	12	15.4	21	26.9	16	20.5	3	3.8	6	7.7	3	3.8	17	21.8	78	100
Lack of interest in exercising rights	12	15.4	14	17.9	15	19.2	10	12.8	5	6.4	6	7.7	16	20.5	78	100
Legal framework not (fully) in place	12	15.4	20	25.6	17	21.8	4	5.1	3	3.8	4	5.1	18	23.1	78	100
Administrative complications	12	15.4	12	15.4	11	14.1	14	17.9	4	5.1	8	10.3	17	21.8	78	100
Other factors	12	15.4	7	9.0	3	3.8	0	0.0	2	2.6	4	5.1	50	64.1	78	100

3.2.1. Right to Complain to the Ombudsman and to Petition the European Parliament

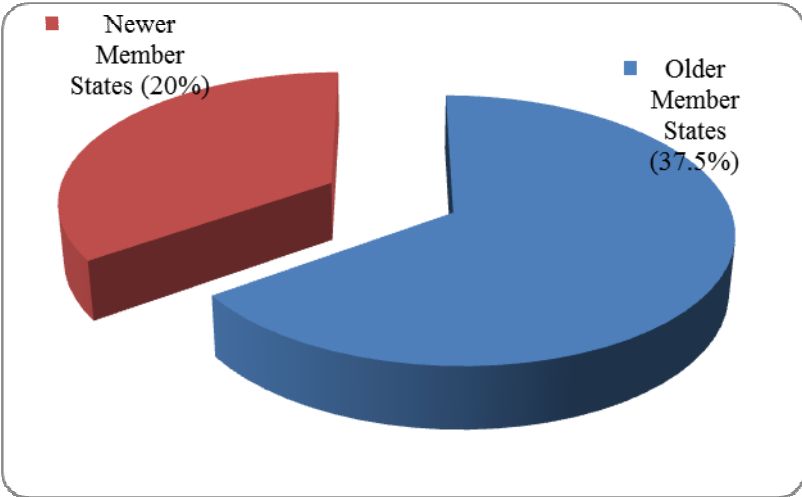
Overall, the perception amongst LRAs is that there is a very low awareness amongst citizens of their right to complain to the Ombudsman and to petition the European Parliament. Just 5% thought otherwise. However, most LRAs did not know or expressed a neutral opinion.

Figure 3.10: How aware are citizens in your region/municipality of their right to complain to the Ombudsman and petition the European Parliament?



A cross-tabulation of the survey responses suggests that awareness levels are generally seen by LRAs to be higher in the older Member States than in the newer ones. Overall, 37% of LRAs in the older Member States said that there were quite or very low levels of awareness compared with 20% in newer ones. This could be explained by the fact that there is more interest in newer Member States in using EU citizens' rights because their relatively recent accession campaigns raised awareness of these and other benefits of EU membership.

Figure 3.11: Cross tabulation by older/newer Member States – Awareness of citizens of their right to complain to the Ombudsman and petition the European Parliament (% quite or very low awareness)



As with the other EU citizens' rights, lack of awareness and lack of interest are seen by LRAs as the main obstacles to making effective the right to complain to the Ombudsman and petition the European Parliament. The analysis below of the survey data highlights the fact that barriers to exercising these rights are seen as highest of all.

Table 3.7: What are the main obstacles in your country/region/municipality to making effective the right to complain to the Ombudsman and petition the European Parliament?

Options	There are no obstacles		Not significant at all		Not very significant		Neutral		Quite significant		Very significant indeed		Don't know/ no opinion		Total	
	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%
Lack of awareness of rights	6	7.7	5	6.4	4	5.1	8	10.3	10	12.8	22	28.2	23	29.5	78	100
Lack of interest in exercising rights	6	7.7	5	6.4	8	10.3	14	17.9	10	12.8	10	12.8	25	32.1	78	100
Legal framework not (fully) in place	6	7.7	17	21.8	10	12.8	8	10.3	1	1.3	6	7.7	30	38.5	78	100
Administrative complications	6	7.7	6	7.7	11	14.1	11	14.1	4	5.1	11	14.1	29	37.2	78	100
Other factors	6	7.7	3	3.8	1	1.3	2	2.6	0	0.0	4	5.1	62	79.5	78	100

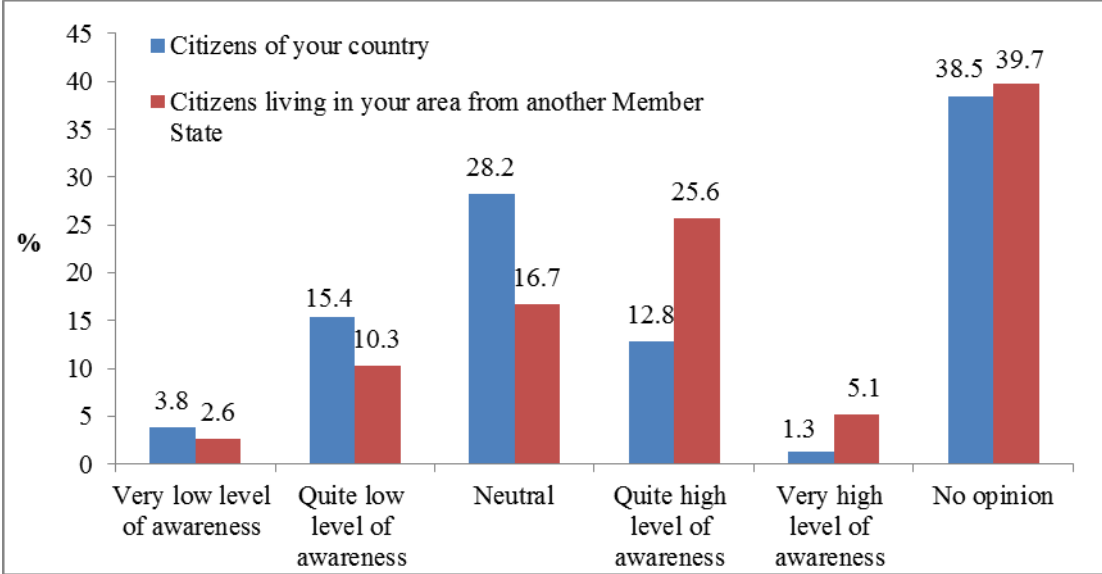
These findings are confirmed by the conclusions of the Special Eurobarometer 17.5. Roughly half of the respondents would like to know more about what the EU Ombudsman does, while the other half expressed little interest in learning more about the Ombudsman's role. The level of interest in the Ombudsman varies considerably between Member States, ranging from 74% in Cyprus who expressed an interest to 21% who do so in Slovakia. A majority of respondents (52%) think that the Ombudsman's most important function is to ensure that EU citizens know their rights and how to use them.

3.2.2. Overall awareness of EU citizens' rights

According to the Eurobarometer (294) findings, although the majority (79%) of EU citizens claim familiarity with the term "citizen of the European Union", only 43% say they know its precise meaning and less than one-third (32%) of respondents from the 27 EU Member States consider themselves well informed about their rights as citizens of the European Union.

Overall, the survey results suggest that there is only a moderately high level of awareness of EU citizens' rights. Interestingly, awareness is seen by LRAs as higher amongst citizens living in their area from other countries than amongst nationals: whereas approaching a third (30%) of the former were seen as having 'quite' or 'very' high levels of awareness of their rights, this was only just over 14% in the case of the latter group. However, most LRAs did not have an opinion on this issue.

Figure 3.14: Overall, to what extent are people in your area aware of their rights as European citizens?



3.3. Case Studies on Best Practice

In this section, we present and evaluate the case study material that has been collected on good practices in the promotion of EU citizenship and citizens’ rights.

3.3.1. Methodological Framework

Based on the survey responses and further desk research, examples of good practices have been collected from Austria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. These countries provide a good mix of experience. The following table provides a breakdown of the case studies by theme:

Table 3.8: Breakdown of case studies by theme

Theme	No.	%
Promotion of EU citizens’ rights in general	7	21
Electoral Rights	12	35
Right to free movement and residence	12	35
Right to Complain to the Ombudsman and petition the EP	3	9
Total	34	100

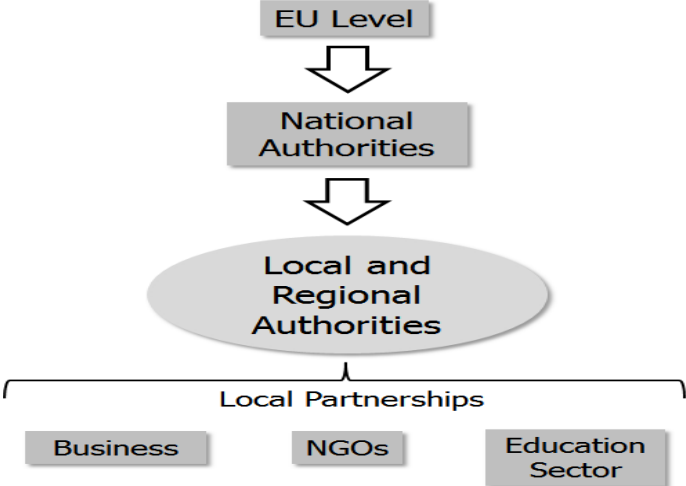
In addition to classifying the case studies according to that type of EU citizens’ rights they focus on, a distinction can be made between:

- **EU-wide schemes** - some schemes originate at the EU level with a ‘vertical’ implementation path involving different levels of governance;
- **LRA-led schemes** - other schemes originate with LRAs themselves with a more ‘horizontal’ implementation pattern involving a range of local partners;
- **Schemes combining ‘vertical’ and ‘horizontal’ features** – many schemes combine elements from the two dimensions.

Examples of EU-wide schemes include the Europe for Citizens Programme which supports a wide range of activities and organisations (including LRAs and NGOs) involved in promoting active European citizenship, especially the involvement of citizens and civil society organisations. Other EU-wide programmes, although not directly focusing on issues related to EU citizenship, provide a useful base for promoting the right to free movement and residence. Such schemes include: INTERREG IV (cross-border programmes), the EURES programme, the Rights and Citizenship programme, ERASMUS programme, Leonardo da Vinci programme, Grundtvig and Comenius programmes.

Many of the case studies in this section are essentially LRA-led and implemented in partnership with other local stakeholders. Key stakeholders include: schools, universities and other educational establishments which have an important role in raising awareness of European citizens’ rights amongst young people, both in relation to their own nationals but also by virtue of the fact that universities often attract students from other EU Member States; the private sector is also an important local stakeholder – many larger businesses have expatriate workers, or want to transfer workers from one country to another, and their employers have a role – potentially at least – in helping to ensure that they take advantage of EU citizens’ rights, particularly in relation to mobility of labour; last but not least, NGOs and civil society are also significant partners for LRAs in the promotion of EU citizenship and citizens’ rights.

The following diagram summarises the two dimensions. Ideally, examples of good practice will combine the two dimensions with, in particular, EU schemes being implemented by LRAs in partnership with other local and regional stakeholders.



The following table provides a list of the case studies that are examined in this section, indicating how they are classified.

Table 3.9: List of Case Studies

No.	Case Studies (Name)	Country	Type of measure
1	Active citizenship – What is your approach? ‘Youth in action’ Programme	France	Promotion of EU citizens’ rights in general
2	Citizens’ panel’s methodology among LRAs: E-panels: fostering citizens’ participation and volunteering in a wider Europe	The Association of Local Democracy Agencies	Promotion of EU citizens’ rights in general
3	Active European Citizenship: awareness raising and training, citizens’ panels (e-panels) and active learning.	The Association of Local Democracy Agencies	Promotion of EU citizens’ rights in general
4	ALL.4.EU: Citizens for Europe	Italy	Promotion of EU citizens’ rights in general
5	ALL.4.EU: Citizens for Europe	Italy	Promotion of EU citizens’ rights in general
6	Being Citizens in Europe	Sweden	Promotion of EU citizens’ rights in general
7	Young people from Sweden and Portugal learn more about democracy	Sweden	Promotion of EU citizens’ rights in general
8	Classes to promote knowledge about EU integration among pupils	Poland	Educational projects focusing on young people
9	Information program with a focus on young people in the lead up to the 2009 European Parliament Elections	Austria	Educational projects focusing on young people
10	Campaign to raise awareness amongst pupils of EP elections	Poland	Educational projects focusing on young people
11	Conceptualizing European identity through common historical cultural heritage	Austria and Czech Republic	Educational projects focusing on young people
12	Information campaign	Spain	Information campaign - workshop
13	Information campaign to increase participation of Polish and Portuguese communities in the EP, and other elections	Wales	Information campaign - workshop
14	European Information Campaign: ‘The right to vote as a structural element of European citizenship’	Spain	Information campaign - workshop
15	Information activities - LRAs elections closer to citizens	Malta	Information campaign - workshop
16	European Dialogues Conference	Spain	Information campaign - workshop
17	Campaign to raise awareness of EP elections	Netherlands	Information campaign - workshop
18	Distribution of information on EU affairs and rights to the country’s population	Romania	Information campaign - workshop
19	Europe and its citizens. A dialogue” – A campaign on EU matters and rights.	Romania	Information campaign - workshop
20	Twinning project - youth training	France	Educational projects focusing on young people
21	Student exchange and scholarships	Spain	Educational projects focusing on young people
22	GOAL-Granting opportunities for Active Learning – improving the citizens’ panel methodology	Hungary	Educational projects focusing on young people
23	Cross-border regional cooperation to promote and welcome citizens from neighbourhood country	Germany	Cross – border cooperation
24	Twinning exchanges	Wales	Cross – border cooperation
25	Ibermovilitas	Spain	Cross – border cooperation

No.	Case Studies (Name)	Country	Type of measure
26	Different Views, Hexham Youth Initiative	UK	Cross – border cooperation
27	Cross-Border Office for Youth Emancipation	Spain	Cross – border cooperation
28	‘Muévetepor Europa’ - Online course to promote the right to free movement in the European Union.	Spain	Cross – border cooperation
29	‘Cities on the rise’: Adaptation of the economic strategy of the North Austrian and South Bohemian regions through networking and coordination	Austria and Czech Republic	Cross – border cooperation
30	DECISIVE Project: Development of Cypriot Twinning Capacities through active Volunteering	Cyprus	Cross – border cooperation
31	Empowering European Citizens	Sweden	Cooperation with NGOs
32	European Ombudsman Visit	Italy	Right to complain to EU Ombudsman and Petition the EP
33	EuroPetition initiative	Italy	Right to complain to EU Ombudsman and Petition the EP
34	Free, general information number (1700)		Right to complain to EU Ombudsman and Petition the EP

The more specific criteria used in selecting and assessing good practices, as noted earlier in the Report, are based on five factors: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impacts and sustainability). A definition of these terms was provided in Section 2.

The case studies have been developed on the basis of answers to the survey questionnaire, follow-up interviews and desk research. The following section provides a description of 33 best practices highlighting measures being implemented by Local and Regional Authorities and local NGOs to promote EU citizenship and citizens’ rights.

3.3.2. Promotion of EU citizens' rights in general

Project title	Country	Organiser/initiator	Duration	
			Start	Finish
Case Study 1: Active citizenship – What is your approach? ‘Youth in action’ Programme	France	Internationales Forum Burg Liebenzell, Agenzia per la promozione dei Giovani	2011	2013
<p><i>Main Aims and Target Group</i></p> <p>The project aims to get young people who are active in the local or regional councils of the partner countries to exchange views on how they work and how they interact with their elected officials to compare the subjects they cover and the influence they have on the decisions of local and regional bodies while offering their recommendations.</p> <p>The objective is to help other youth councils to build capacity in order to promote awareness-raising projects on European citizenship. The involvement of youth groups in local authorities in France will enable them to discover both local and European institutions and thereby help them develop a sense of belonging to their community and to the concept of Europe.</p> <p><i>Description</i></p> <p>Ten young delegates from France, Germany, Italy, Sweden and Turkey will take part in the project along with two youth workers per organisation. The next stage in the project will allow young participants to compare the operation of their respective structures and then draw up a practical guide for Youth Councils, and publish a booklet on their experience during the project's lifetime.</p> <p>At each meeting the host country's youths will present the environment in which they live to the other youths. This involves cultural visits and visits of national, regional and local institutions. Young people meet with elected officials, department and the Region that will explain the functioning of institutions and the priorities to manage at local and regional level. They will stress the role played by the European Union in their city, state and / or region.</p> <p>During their stay in the partner cities, groups take part in meetings of local and regional youth councils. The youths of the host country present their projects explaining what they had to do to make them successful. Participation in the sessions of the various working groups is then followed by an exchange of views. After each meeting each youth group writes an evaluation report on a particular project. These evaluations serve as the basis for creating a practical guide for youth councils.</p> <p>This project is co-organised with the Internationales Forum Burg Liebenzell (Germany) and the Agenzia per la promozione dei Giovani (Italy). The City of Gothenburg and the Civil Dialogue Association, Bursa (Turkey) act as partners in this project. The project is funded under the Citizenship programme of DG Education and Culture and received a grant of €50,600 for 2011-2013.</p> <p><i>Impact and Scope for Replication</i></p> <p>No results are available yet, as this project is still being implemented. The guide will be disseminated to youth council services and other relevant local and regional bodies in each partner country. Additionally, the guide is to be used in schools to initiate discussions around European citizenship. The local authorities taking part in this project will publish the final report of the project on their website as well as the guide of good practices developed by the participating youth councils.</p>				

Project title	Country	Organiser/initiator	Duration	
			Start	Finish
Case Study 2: E-panels: fostering citizens' participation and volunteering in a wider Europe	France	The Association of Local Democracy Agencies	2006	2010
<p><i>Main Aims and Target Group</i></p> <p>This project was supported under Action 1.2: Citizens' projects of the Europe for Citizens Programme. Action 1 supports the development of a new batch of citizens' projects that aim to enhance citizen participation in the EU process through innovative activities. Actions could include the establishment of citizens' panels and juries, enabling Europeans to voice their views on various EU-related issues. Citizens' projects employ innovative methods to bring together citizens from different walks of life, to collaborate on or debate common European issues at local and EU level (migration, security, employment, environment, multiculturalism etc.). The projects implemented by ALDA usually gather LRAs and civil society organisations from several eligible countries, members of the EU and candidate countries.</p> <p><i>Description</i></p> <p>ALDA is an NGO which aims to promote good governance and citizen participation at the local level, focusing on activities that facilitate cooperation between local authorities and civil society. It is the umbrella organisation of Local Democracy Agencies which are self-sustainable, locally registered NGOs that act as promoters of good governance and local self-government and is a membership based organisation with more than 160 members (including Local Authorities, Associations of Local Authorities and non-governmental organisations) from more than 30 countries. It is funded through membership fees and project funding from the European Commission, the Council of Europe and other public and private donors.</p> <p>The methodology of citizen panels is a collaborative approach that enables an effective dialogue between authorities and citizens, targeting ordinary citizens not usually involved in consultation processes at local level who find a voice therein. It encourages the presence of activators, who act as resource persons and multipliers in their communities, and who can motivate participants to actively take part in the panel discussions. Citizens were encouraged to take part in the panels by personal motivation from the activators and from campaigning by the partner organisation.</p> <p>This measure was tested through a series of pilot projects launched in a call for proposals in April 2006. ALDA was one of the organisations which benefited from a pilot project and has been coordinating four of them since 2006. The citizens' panels aim to encourage active participation by citizens in EU and local levels by stimulating dialogue between citizens and institutions at local and European level. The ultimate aim of the citizens' panels is to submit recommendations on the selected theme to EU institutions.</p> <p>In 2010, ALDA implemented the project "E-panels: fostering citizens' participation and volunteering in a wider Europe" to provide an opportunity to address the EU institutions' "democratic deficit" and bridge the gap between citizens and the European Union in an innovative way with ICT tools and volunteering. The project gathered participants from Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, France, Macedonia, and Spain.</p> <p>The most important activity of the project was the creation of "e-panels". These online forums included 926 citizens participating to the e-panels from different ages, nationalities and backgrounds. There were 7 panels and around 90 participants per panel. The rest of the participants took part in other related activities such as national and international events of promotion of the methodology.</p> <p><i>Impacts and Scope for Replication</i></p> <p>It led to drafting a set of recommendations for the European policy makers by country (English, Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, France, Macedonia, and Spain) highlighting the need to bring EU institutions closer to EU citizens through a better dissemination of the information about the EU, European citizen rights and opportunities for its citizens.</p> <p>Recommendations were also made about the economic, social and educational fields such as youth unemployment and migration policies. The total budget for this project was 228,000 Euros for one year, out of which 52,49 % was co-funding from the EC and 47,51 % invested by applicant organisations and partners.</p>				

Project title	Country	Organiser/initiator	Duration	
			Start	Finish
Case Study 3: Active European Citizenship: awareness raising and training, citizens' panels (e-panels) and active learning.	France	The Association of Local Democracy Agencies	2006	2010
<p><i>Main Aims and Target Group</i></p> <p>The project aimed to promote awareness raising and training activities through citizens' panels (e-panels) and active learning. It was funded under the programme Action 1, Active Citizenship measures 2.2. It included 22 <i>partners</i> from Albania, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Ireland, Italy, Macedonia, Malta, Romania, Slovakia and Spain.</p> <p><i>Description</i></p> <p>ALDA promotes the Europe for Citizens programme, and calls for partners contacts to be either published on their website or sent by e-mail to members of the ALDA network. This ensured that partners in the Active European Citizenship project could establish a diverse group of partners from different EU Member States and neighbouring countries within one project.</p> <p>The programme raises awareness among the partners about the importance of active citizenship as a multiplier for promoting a greater sense of ownership of the EU and European values. The project provides training, information and cooperation opportunities in the framework of Europe for Citizens that contribute to creating new partnerships and networks among different kind of stakeholders such as local authorities, civil society organisations and research centres. ALDA relies on the partners in the project to disseminate their findings. They usually do this by organising campaigns about the programme as well as large fairs on topics such as citizenship notably during the European Week of Local Democracy.</p> <p><i>Impacts and Scope for Replication</i></p> <p>The overall outcome of the project was an increased knowledge of the Europe for Citizens Programme among targeted stakeholders from EU and non-EU member States, but also a better understanding by citizens of EU values and actions in their countries. These targeted stakeholders act as multipliers in their communities.</p>				

Project title	Country	Organiser/initiator	Duration	
			Start	Finish
Case Study 4: ALL.4.EU: Citizens for Europe	Italy	Consortium for the Development of Polesine; Regional Development Agency	2006	2010
<p><i>Main Aims and Target Group</i> The project aimed to promote awareness raising and training activities through citizens' panels (e-panels) and active learning. It was funded under the programme Action 1, Active Citizenship measures 2.2. It included 22 <i>partners</i> from Albania, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Ireland, Italy, Macedonia, Malta, Romania, Slovakia and Spain.</p> <p><i>Description</i> ALDA promotes the Europe for Citizens programme, and calls for partners contacts to be either published on their website or sent by e-mail to members of the ALDA network. This ensured that partners in the Active European Citizenship project could establish a diverse group of partners from different EU Member States and neighbouring countries within one project. The programme raises awareness among the partners about the importance of active citizenship as a multiplier for promoting a greater sense of ownership of the EU and European values. The project provides training, information and cooperation opportunities in the framework of Europe for Citizens that contribute to creating new partnerships and networks among different kind of stakeholders such as local authorities, civil society organisations and research centres. ALDA relies on the partners in the project to disseminate their findings. They usually do this by organising campaigns about the programme as well as large fairs on topics such as citizenship notably during the European Week of Local Democracy.</p> <p><i>Impacts and Scope for Replication</i> The overall outcome of the project was an increased knowledge of the Europe for Citizens Programme among targeted stakeholders from EU and non-EU member States, but also a better understanding by citizens of EU values and actions in their countries. These targeted stakeholders act as multipliers in their communities.</p>				

Project title	Country	Organiser/initiator	Duration	
			Start	Finish
Case Study 5: ALL.4.EU: Citizens for Europe	Italy	Consortium for the Development of Polesine; Regional Development Agency	2007	2009

Main Aims and Target Group

The **aim of the project was to promote the participation of citizens in the European elections through their involvement in citizens' panels including European citizens who do not have opportunities to access European institutions.** The project took place from December 1st, 2008 to September 30, 2009 (10 months) as a follow up of the pilot project "EURaction: Citizens acting for Europe" implemented in 2007. In Italy, the Consortium for Development of Polesine facilitated the involvement of all the municipalities of the Province of Rovigo in the project.

The project targeted citizens who would not have spontaneously participated in projects of a European nature, paying attention to involve people with different demographic, social and professional backgrounds. Specific target groups included young people, Local Authorities and Civil Society.

The projects overall objectives were to **encourage the participation of European citizens in the construction of Europe and in the debate about further integration**; enhance the relation between European citizens and EU institutions; promote a "two-way process" (information and feedback) between EU Institutions and citizens; encourage a bottom up approach to allow citizens to express their views. In the different activities (citizens' panel at the local level, international events, final conference, etc.) the project aimed to involve 695 people from 14 different countries.

Description

In the different **activities (including citizens' panel at the local level, international events, and conferences)** the project involved (directly) 700 – 1000 people. Moreover, it was estimated to have involved another 5000 people as indirect beneficiaries of the actions. Citizens' panels were asked, both at local/national and at the international level (offering thus both a national and a European perspective) to draft recommendations which will support the European decision makers in their legislative and operational action in the specific field addressed. European citizens were informed about the project by a strategy developed on how to inform about the project through press Conferences and the media and dedicated website.

Main Impacts and Scope for Replication

The main impact of the project was to increase the participation of citizens through their involvement in "citizens' panels" by using a bottom up approach to allow citizens to express and formulate their views and opinions on the role of citizens and civil society in Europe in the form of recommendations for policy makers at European level.

Through this project at least 21 people from 7 Member States were trained, and acquired new information, knowledge and skills in the field of active citizenship at the local level. The project also impacted on those who were only indirectly reached, especially through the web site, publications, and the structured methodological tool. This provided a large number of citizens and civil society organisations with new skills to participate in the life of the community and to interact with EU institutions.

The communities involved in the project gained new resources to promote and develop citizen participation in elections. The trained citizens' panels made significant contributions to civil society organisations and local authorities and helped raise awareness among European citizens' about active citizenship issues.

Project title	Country	Organiser/initiator	Duration	
			Start	Finish
Case Study 6: Being Citizens in Europe	Sweden	Skara municipality; Youth Council (LRA)	2009	2010
<p><i>Main Aims and Target Group</i> The project took place in 2009 and included partner organisations in Spain, Sweden, Lithuania and the UK. In Sweden, Skara municipality Youth Council was involved in the project. It was initiated by civil society organisations and aimed to promote cooperation between European citizens by discussing issues relevant to youth groups and to make long-term agreements between youth groups from partner countries.</p> <p><i>Description</i> The project set up meetings to discuss European values and the possibility to carry out common projects. These meetings led to proposals for projects that aimed to foster tolerance to other cultures, solidarity and elimination of xenophobia. One meeting was held on European day, which allowed the Lithuanian and Swedish partners to carry out a quiz about Europe. The project gave partners an opportunity to get acquainted with other cultures, traditions, youth hobbies, and civic activities as well as improve their foreign language skills. Many of the young people prepared projects for future activities and aimed to set up meetings with European citizens in other Member States. Cost of the project was EUR 10,700.</p> <p><i>Main Impacts and Scope for Replication</i> The project was carried out from September 2008 to June 2009 (12 months). A number of participants are still contact with each other. The Skara municipality Youth Council considers the project to be one of the most successful projects for sustaining communication among young participants and improving cross-border cooperation. Skara municipality expressed an interest in continuing the project activities for 2009-2010, but grant funding was not available. The lack of funding at local and regional level means that the scope for continuing activities such as workshops on citizenship with local youth groups is limited.</p>				

Project title	Country	Organiser/initiator	Duration	
			Start	Finish
Case Study 7: Young people from Sweden and Portugal learn more about democracy	Sweden	Oikos Community (NGO)	2008	2009
<p>The Oikos Community, a NGO based in Lund, Sweden, had for some years entered into a co-operation agreement between itself and the Xunta de Sabrosa in Portugal under the Youth in Action programme. The total project cost was €101,759, funded through the local EU office in Sweden, Oikos and other partners.</p> <p><i>Main Aims and Target Group</i></p> <p>In the context of this cooperation, a project was undertaken to understand better how democracy works and to compare how democracy works at different levels in the two countries, to see how it influences their leisure, their studies and their health, for example, and to learn how young people from another country sees the democratic reality. The ultimate aim was to help make young people more active in the community at local, regional, national and international level.</p> <p><i>Description</i></p> <p>The project started in February 2008 and ended in June 2009. The partner organisations were: Câmara Municipal de Sabrosa, Cruz Vermelha, Lunds Kommun Kulturförvaltningen (Kultur Lund), Malmö Stad (Modersmålsnheten Malmö), and Musikskolan Sabrosa. A total of sixty young people between the ages of 13-30 from Sweden and Portugal were involved (1/3 in the 15-17 age group, 1/3 in the 18-25 age group). At least 300 people participated in the overall project.</p> <p>To compare how democracy works at different levels in different countries the young people have taken trips around various schools, government administrations and boards, speaking to those involved and learning, for example, the distinction between politicians and civil servants, and understanding how they influence the community. The programme has involved both the Swedish group visiting the Portuguese community (for one week) and the group from Sabrosa visiting Lund (11 days). There were 12 workshops, 16 seminars, 4 exhibitions, 2 video presentations, 1 documentary, 12 cookery meetings, 8 open-house events, 6 debate for a, and 23 study visits. Overall, 90 young people were involved in specific project activities and 300 people were involved altogether.</p> <p>The project was promoted in a number of ways. For example, a film and a photo exhibition was launched, including a website, facebook / Youtube pages and a project summary document that was spread to partners, municipalities, youth clubs and schools. Seminars were also held to disseminate the project results in cooperation with the pedagogy department at Lund's university. A press-release led to a radio interview.</p> <p>Participants were encouraged in the course of the project to identify areas of interest, and to choose a theme within this area, and then given the opportunity to interview a politician in that policy area. The Swedish project partners were allocated a total budget of €31,346 for 2008-2009, of which €18,808 euro was paid by the YiA programme.</p> <p><i>Impacts and Scope for Replication</i></p> <p>The project had a number of impacts for the young participants. In particular, the participants increased their knowledge and interest of history and the development of post-world war Europe and the European Union. Local youth activities were prompted due to the increased understanding of the importance of active citizenship. Young people improved their capacity to identify solutions and methods to improve their future. The young participants developed a common proposal for a model for youth democracy at the local level.</p> <p>A web portal has been created through which the participants will be able to communicate. The youths met in Lund to share experiences. At the end of the project the young people should be able to present their opinions and ideas to the municipality concerning their needs and what they think should be delivered. An evaluation of the project will be carried out by a person from Lund University to assess the sustainability of the project.</p>				

3.3.3. Electoral Rights

There are several types of schemes are being taken up by LRAs and NGOs to promote electoral rights among EU citizens:

- i. Education-related projects targeting pupils at schools;
- ii. Information campaigns, including measures focusing on nationals living in a LRA area from other EU Member States;
- iii. Other initiatives to raise awareness of EU citizenship electoral rights with a broader target group of citizens.

(i) Education-related projects targeting pupils at schools

The first group of best practices implemented at the local and regional level relates to information and awareness campaigns and projects targeting pupils at schools.

These projects are particularly important for the promotion of EU citizenship and citizens' rights as they prepare young people to exercise their electoral rights in the future. The schemes seek to make young people, especially students, aware of their rights and the competences of the institutions which they are able to influence with their vote. The following good practices provide interesting examples of the ways in which LRAs have developed innovative approaches to raising awareness about the rights of EU citizens among younger target groups.

Project title	Country	Organiser/initiator	Duration	
			Start	Finish
Case Study 8: Classes to promote knowledge about EU integration among pupils	Poland	The Foundation for Dialogue between Cultures Etz Chaim in Wroclaw	2003	2010
<p><i>Main Aims and Target Group</i></p> <p>The main aim of this scheme is to increase the awareness of young people aged 12- 14 about their civic duties to their and neighbouring countries and to promote the idea of EU membership, including citizens' rights. The classes also prepared young people for participation in the public life of an integrated Europe. In addition, the campaign aims to deepen the sense of belonging to Europe as well as establishing a connection between the pupils and their local community ("little homeland"). By introducing basic knowledge of law and democratic procedures in Poland to pupils, the campaign prepares pupils to act in accordance with European law.</p> <p><i>Description</i></p> <p>The Dialogue between Cultures Etz Chaim's school (established on the basis of former Lauder Etz Chaim school) in Wroclaw²⁶ includes a class on 'European Integration' within its curriculum. The class is a good example of a practice to promote the idea of EU citizenship among pupils. In 2003, one of the school teachers developed a programme of classes on European integration, which targeted 12-14 year old school pupils. For example, the class programme covers different topics related to the EU, including themes such as, knowledge of the EU integration process, EU institutions, the cultural and social heritage of Europe and 'Europe of the Regions' (developing knowledge of regions and regional identity).</p> <p>In addition to the specialised programme, other activities involving students have also been introduced to promote the idea of EU citizenship. The teacher responsible for developing the programme, along with other school staff, organises events related to current EU affairs and important developments taking place at the EU level. The most recent example of this, 'ABC of Polish Presidency', introduced pupils to the main aims and targets of the Polish EU Presidency through a series of workshops and lectures. Furthermore, one of the teachers has arranged for the children participating in the classes to take part in workshops provided by the Commission's Representative Office in Wroclaw. The workshops provided pupils an opportunity to learn more about the Commission's work and the EU as a whole in an interactive and child-friendly way. After the workshops children received souvenirs and information material from the European Commission.</p> <p><i>Impacts and Scope for Replication</i></p> <p>The programme targets the early stages of childhood education, as this is the stage when children develop civic and political awareness, which in the future could translate into exercising their voting and other civic rights. In order to be aware of and exercise their voting rights, pupils first need to understand their rights and responsibilities as EU citizens. Also students who are familiar with basic EU issues, despite not being able yet to exercise them, through involvement in different projects and events organised by school, influence their parents or guardians who already have such rights. Although there is no information on the number of school children who have benefited from the classes, it is likely that hundreds have benefited. There is clearly scope for this type of initiative to be widely promoted by LRAs among other local and regional schools, encouraging teachers to take an active part in promoting EU citizenship and EU rights and cooperate with Commissions Contact Points in EU Member States.</p>				

²⁶ The foundation was established in 2011 by a group of parents who wanted to create a friendly environment for the growth of their children's education, which would be an extension of the family home:
<http://www.etzchaim.pl/fundacja/>.

Project title	Country	Organiser/initiator	Duration	
			Start	Finish
Case Study 9: Information program with a focus on young people in the lead up to the 2009 European Parliament Elections	Austria	Styria (LRA)	2008	2009
<p><i>Main Aims and Target Group</i> This program ran from October 2008 to May 2009. It aimed to help young people to relate to and gain an understanding of the EU in the run up to the 2009 European Parliament elections.</p> <p><i>Description</i> The programme involved a combination of youth workshops and information events. A panel discussion was held once a month with workshops in schools beforehand. The panel discussions were held in the media centre of the province of Styria and were transmitted live on the internet. Viewers were able to join the discussion by chatting online and asking the panel questions.</p> <p><i>Impacts and Scope for Replication</i> By providing a platform for young people to raise provocative questions and address sensitive issues regarding the role of the EU, the program established itself as a credible and objective way for participants to learn about their rights as EU citizens.</p>				

Project title	Country	Organiser/initiator	Duration	
			Start	Finish
Case Study 10: Campaign to raise awareness amongst pupils of EP elections	Poland	Centre for Citizenship Education (NGO)	2009	2009
<p><i>Main Aims and Target Group</i></p> <p>The project took place shortly before the elections to the European Parliament and focused on young people in eight cities (4 Polish and 4 cities from neighbouring countries – Czech Republic, Germany, Lithuania and Slovakia). Meetings were held in Augustow (with guests from Vilnius), Police (with pupils from Loecknitz), Rzepedź (with participants from Medzilaborce) and Cieszyn (with pupils from the Czech Cieszyn). The project aimed to raise awareness about the European Parliament and other EU institutions.</p> <p><i>Description</i></p> <p>The project consisted of performing simulations, in which participants were divided into groups and played roles of politicians, spokespersons, journalists and election officials in a fictional European country. Approximately 400 people aged 14 to 17 years took part, preparing a campaign for fictional European Parliament candidates</p> <p>Participants of the two countries were divided into teams representing specific political groups in the European Parliament. Their task was to prepare an election campaign for the invented European Parliament candidate. The scale and design of the project attracted a lot of interest from the media. Other schools and NGOs also expressed interest in participating in similar future projects. By introducing role play activities the project was able to engage the imagination of young participants. This helped them understand how EU institutions and citizens' rights can impact them as individuals, which is particularly important for the involvement of young people.</p> <p>The project was funded through 'Action 2 - Active civil society; Europe Measure 3 - Support for projects initiated by civil society organisations of the Citizens for Europe Programme'.</p> <p><i>Impacts and Scope for Replication</i></p> <p>The scale and the theme of the project met with great interest from media, which were reporting the course of the event. In addition, other schools have expressed their interest in participating in future editions, as well as international organisations of the third sector, willing to cooperate in the future.</p> <p>As a result of the media and personal contacts with participating students, the knowledge and ideas were also promoted among adults. Such an event not only provides future voters with necessary knowledge but also gives NGOs, schools and supporting LRAs the possibility to promote their activities on the wider scale. Cooperation with neighbouring countries promotes openness and also introduces students to cultures of other regions and countries.</p>				

Project title	Country	Organiser/initiator	Duration	
			Start	Finish
Case Study 11: Conceptualizing European identity through common historical cultural heritage	Austria and Czech Republic	Horn, Raab-an-der Thaya, Ceske Budejovice, Jihlava and Telc (LRA)	2009	2011
<p><i>Main Aims and Target Group</i> The project aimed to disseminate knowledge to the local populations about the common history shared by Northern Austria and the Southern Czech Republic in the cities of Horn, Raab-an-der Thaya (AT) Ceske Budejovice, Jihlava and Telc (CZ) and surrounding areas. The project objective was to increase the cross-border mobility of European citizens by promoting the touristic and cultural assets of Northern Austria and Southern Czech Republic. The project was led by the participating municipalities and targeted institutions in secondary and tertiary education. These institutions were encouraged to network together on both sides of the border. The project was developed through educational modules that were specifically designed for school children aged between 10 and 18 years old.</p> <p><i>Description</i> The content of the modules, taught in the context of the project, aimed to raise young people's awareness of the European dimension of their identity. The project also offered lectures for stakeholders from civil society organisations and the wider public on both sides of the border as well as cultural institutions and associations. The lectures focused on the cultural heritage and key historical moments shared by the two regions.</p> <p><i>Impacts and Scope for Replication</i> An illustrated booklet as produced that can be used as a teaching aid in schools. The material focuses on the history of both countries and their interdependence, including cultural differences such as the perception of the 'other' and its affiliated prejudices, myths and stereotypes. The project also offers a cultural package for secondary school children, which includes cross-border field trips to partner schools. The project activities were presented at a mobile exhibition on both sides of the border, especially in areas of regional and historical significance.</p>				

(ii) Information campaigns, including measures focusing on nationals living in a LRA area from other EU Member States

The second group of best practices implemented at local and regional level to promote electoral rights, involves information campaigns/projects which aim to inform local but also non-national EU citizens about their right to vote or stand for local and EP elections and encourage them to actively exercise these rights.

Project title	Country	Organiser/initiator	Duration	
			Start	Finish
Case Study 12: Information campaign	Spain	Association Europeos por España; Islas Baleares	2009	2009
<p><i>Main Aims and Target Group</i> The campaign aimed to make European citizens aware of the necessary voter registration form and to increase the number of registered EU citizens on census, which allows them to participate in elections. According to the INE (National Statistics Institute, 2011), 22% of the Balearic Islands population of more than 1 million are foreign nationals, making it the province in Spain with the second highest number of foreign residents. Some 53% of foreigners come from another EU Member States, a high proportion are German (15% of total), British (9%), Italians (7%), Romanians (5%), Bulgarians (4%) and French (3%). The campaign targeted the biggest groups of citizens from other EU Member States, namely UK and Germany.</p> <p><i>Description</i> The project was started initially by the association "Europeos por España" and later joined by the political party Partido Popular. 'Europeos por España' was set up by a group of European citizens living in the Calvia area of Mallorca. The aims of the association are to promote the integration and active participation of EU citizens in political life in Spain and to encourage citizens to register (the Padrón)²⁷ in their municipality of residence and to provide assistance and information. The main aim of the campaign was to make European citizens aware of the necessary voter registration form, which has to be completed and registered at the local Town Hall at least four months before the election date, especially during the December-January period when a large number of these residents are away. Furthermore, the Partido Popular sent a full electoral programme to every registered European resident, which was prepared in Spanish, English and German.</p> <p><i>Impacts and Scope for Replication</i> The example shows how an information campaign can successfully increase the number of registered voters in local and European elections. The campaign was well received by EU citizens and led to a doubling in the number of European residents registered in the electoral census, as well as the number who actually voted. The campaign also increased interest in local politics among the groups targeted by the overall project.</p>				

²⁷The Padrón is the list of all the people who live in a certain town (the administrative registry where all those living in a certain town are registered).

Project title	Country	Organiser/initiator	Duration	
			Start	Finish
Case Study 13: Information campaign to increase participation of Polish and Portuguese communities in the EP, and other elections	Wales	Merthyr Tydfil (LRA)	2007	2012
<p><i>Main Aims and Target Group</i> The campaign was a part of the Borough's Equality Policy and aim's to open access to elections on local and European level. As the borough of Merthyr Tydfil has substantial Polish and Portuguese communities, with a Polish population of around 2,500 and a Portuguese population of roughly 800, therefore Polish and Portuguese citizens were targeted.</p> <p><i>Description</i> The Council has a dedicated Equalities Officer. The officer deals with corporate policies and strategies such as the Equalities Policy and the Single Equality Scheme. The officer works with both internal and external partners to deliver these aims both in terms of employment and service delivery to achieve equality for all. In an attempt to open up access to elections (both European Parliament elections and other) for these populations, the borough council has, since 2007, been providing information on upcoming elections in both Polish and Portuguese. The projects objectives were achieved with the help of the Glamorgan Gate project undertaken by the University of Glamorgan. Their efforts have included providing information on the elections in the local newsletter in both languages, running a telephone helpline in both languages and providing interpreters at the polling stations on the day of the election.</p> <p><i>Impacts and Scope for Replication</i> The projects main impact was to increase the participation of Polish and Portuguese communities in local and European elections. According to the project coordinator, there was a larger interest following the information campaign which encouraged Polish and Portuguese citizens to play a more active role in local politics.</p>				

Project title	Country	Organiser/initiator	Duration	
			Start	Finish
Case Study 14: European Information Campaign: ‘The right to vote as a structural element of European citizenship’	Spain	Coslada (LRA)	2011	2011
<p><i>Main Aims and Target Group</i> Coslada is a city and municipality in the autonomous community of Madrid in central Spain. Most of its foreign-born inhabitants (21,564) come from another EU Member State (more than 86%). Most are Romanian nationals (96%)²⁸. This initiative, which was launched in November 2011, involved an election information campaign for citizens of Romanian origin in the Madrid region.</p> <p><i>Description</i> The initiative was promoted by the City of Coslada and included volunteers from the ‘<i>Federación de Asociaciones de Rumanos en España- FEDROM</i>’ (Federation of Romanians Associations in Spain). The campaign aimed to inform Romanian residents living in Madrid about their right to vote in the May 2011 municipal elections. As part of the campaign an information stand was set up in a central location in the city to distribute promotional materials (i.e. a booklet titled ‘It’s your right, it is your duty’) published in Spanish and Romanian by the Department of Immigration from the Coslada City Council under the agreement established between the Authority and the Federation.</p> <p><i>Impacts and Scope for Replication</i> Although the efforts did not result in a significantly increased participation of Romanian citizens in municipal elections, neighbours of Romanian origin living in Coslada were given the opportunity to learn about their rights and duties as citizens, and to find out the steps that are required to exercise their democratic rights. The campaign also provided a unique opportunity for the municipality of Coslada to collaborate with other LRA’s and community groups.²⁹</p>				

²⁸ National Statistics Institute, 2011

²⁹ Institutions such as the Centro Hispano-Romanian from Corredor de Henares, RoMadrid Youth Association Cultural Club, the Association of Migrant Communities (ACEE), the Romanian Association of Coslada and San Fernando, and the Association of Women "Femeia".

Project title	Country	Organiser/initiator	Duration	
			Start	Finish
Case Study 15: Information activities - LRAs elections closer to citizens	Malta	Santa Lucija (LRA)	2010	2010
<p><i>Main Aims and Target Group</i> The main aim of the activities is to keep close to local citizens and to provide necessary information on upcoming elections and other events taking place in the municipality. It also aims to develop a stronger relationship between LRA and citizens, both national and from other EU Member States.</p>				
<p><i>Description</i> In 2010, the municipality of Santa Lucija organized an electronic database of its citizens to inform them when local and EU elections are due. The included notices are sent via e-mail to a list of subscription members. The project also established a system of notice boards in strategic points in the town centre (especially near the shopping centres, bus stops) for EU citizens who were not subscribed to the database. Information notices were also distributed to shops to promote local and EU elections.</p>				
<p><i>Impacts and Scope for Replication</i> The electronic database of informed European citizens about local and EU elections by allowing them to subscribe to notices sent via email. European citizens can subscribe to information notices and participate in the database via the internet. Through the information notices the project sends information about local and EP elections. The notices are available in English, which allows the project to target European citizens from other Member States with promotional materials. The main impact of the project was to increase the level of awareness among local and European citizens about European and local elections.</p>				

Project title	Country	Organiser/initiator	Duration	
			Start	Finish
Case Study 16: European Dialogues Conference	Spain	Alicante (LRA)	2009	2010
<p><i>Main Aims and Target Group</i> Alicante is the Spanish province with the largest number of foreign residents coming from other European countries (466,684 foreign nationals of which 331,392 come from other EU Member States). The main aim is to provide a platform for discussion on topics related to local community, including in it also citizens from other Member States.</p> <p><i>Description</i> The Alicante European Dialogues Conference that is organised on an annual basis. This provides an opportunity for reflection and dialogue between representatives of municipal governments, councils, residents associations and various experts to discuss issues affecting this group. The third of these events (in 2010) addressed the theme ‘registration and voting in municipal elections for the largest group of European residents in the province of Alicante’. During the conference, three panels were run that focused on the right to vote in municipal elections, the role of media and associations in the electoral process and the importance of active participation of non-national groups in elections. The total cost of the Conference was just over €25,000.</p> <p><i>Impacts and Scope for Replication</i> The Conference was very well attended (170 participants, most of them from UK, Germany and France). Although the European Resident’s Department does not have data on impacts and results of their initiative, the Conference highlighted the difficulties faced by European residents to vote in municipal elections in the current system. High attendance of EU citizens proved that providing a platform for discussion is of the interest of local citizens. It also enabled a dialogue within the local community (including citizens from other EU Member States) to provide concerns and issues related to the current electoral system to local LRAs.</p>				

Project title	Country	Organiser/initiator	Duration	
			Start	Finish
Case Study 17: Campaign to raise awareness of EP elections	Netherlands	The Hague (LRA)	2009	2009
<p><i>Main Aims and Target Group</i></p> <p>The campaign to raise awareness of the 2009 European Parliamentary elections was implemented by the municipality of the Hague in the the Netherlands and ran from 9 May until the European Parliament elections on 4 June. The campaign aimed to promote voter turnout at the municipal elections by carrying out awareness raising activities. The campagin also targeted voters by developing and publishing a newsletter about the importance of the European elections.</p> <p>Although the newsletter was only made available to the local population in the Dutch language, European citizens from expatriate organisations translated the newsletter into English, which expanded the campaign's target group significantly. Furthermore, the Europe Direct Centre³⁰ organised events and provided information during the lead up to the elections. The projects objective was to demonstrate that, by cooperating together, municipalities and local groups are capable of raising awareness effectively about the electoral rights of EU citizens.</p> <p><i>Description</i></p> <p>The municipality of the Hague implemented the awareness raising campaign as a result of low voter turn-out in the European Parliament elections prior to 2009. In the month before the elections, starting on the Day of Europe, several events were organised by the Europe Direct Centre with co-financing from the municipality of the Hague and the European Commission. The municipality of the Hague also developed a special newsletter for the EP-elections and promoted the elections through local and regional media broadcasts.</p> <p>With regard to the types of activities supported by the awareness raising campaign, these consisted of: 12 page newspaper on the EP-elections which reached 230.000 households out of a total 490.000 inhabitants; an official opening of the Europe Direct Centre, which involved 200 participants; a debate on Europe with MEPs and 100 students; and events to mark the outcome of the EP-elections, such as a national broadcast on national television from the Atrium of The Hague's City Hall including 1400 participants and viewers.</p> <p>A large number of European citizens were informed about the campaign through the expatriate organisation ACCESS. This complimented the campaign's objectives to raise awareness among a wide section of the community living in the Hague. The total cost of the campaign are broken down into newspaper and publishing activities (€57.500), broadcasting and other activities € 9000.</p> <p><i>Impacts and Scope for Replication</i></p> <p>In terms of the impact of the campaign on the local community and EU citizens, a key indicator of success was the number of participants and increased voter turnout. For example, voter turnout increased by 6% at the 2009 EP elctions, compared with a decline of 2.5% in the rest of the Netherlands. Overall, the number of voters in the Hague EP elections increased by 41.6% in 2009 compared to 35.7% in 2004. Therefore 20.944 additional people voted partly as a result of the awareness campaign. Despite the campaign's relative success the municipality of the Hague is not planning any similar activities for the upcoming EP elections in 2014.</p>				

³⁰ The Europe Direct Centre (EDC) was established in 2009 to provide an information point for European citizens about Europe and the European Union.

Project title	Country	Organiser/initiator	Duration	
			Start	Finish
Case Study 18: Distribution of information on EU affairs and rights to the country's population	Romania	Arges County (LRA)	2005	2012
<p><i>Main Aims and Target Group</i></p> <p>Two initiatives were implemented by the Prefecture of Arges County aimed to distribute information on EU affairs and rights to national populations. The Euro-Info Arges Bulletin, issued each trimester by the Prefecture and the 2010 Essays Competition organised by the same institution are both mainly financed through the Prefectures own resources.</p> <p><i>Description</i></p> <p>The Euro-Info Arges Bulletin extensively covered (in two editions from May 2005 and February 2012) the subject of EU Citizenship and the rights of European citizens. In particular, the May 2005 Bulletin presents, under the title “EU citizenship – a new identity”, the legal foundations of European citizenship.</p> <p>The bulletin also takes stock of other rights guaranteed by the European Treaties that underline the right to equal opportunities/non-discrimination. The bulletin also explains which European institution should be contacted in case the rights of EU citizens are infringed, as well as the role of the European Commission in such cases.</p> <p>The February 2012 edition of the Euro-Info Arges Bulletin addressed the topic of rights guaranteed by the European institutions and laws available to EU citizens as well as elaborating on EU attempts to promote these rights world-wide.</p> <p>The Euro-Info Arges Bulletin was sent to all 105 city halls in the county (municipalities/cities/communes) and at least half of their employees (approximately 500 people) used the Bulletin as their main source of information. Furthermore, the information in the Bulletin may be picked up by local and regional media. For example, an EU citizenship article from the 2005 edition of the Bulletin was used by local print media. A second Bulletin aimed to raise awareness among high-school pupils about the Europe Day celebrations, in 2010.</p> <p>The Arges Prefecture invited the high-schools to participate in an essay competition, titled “The rights and liberties of European Citizenship”. 17 high schools took part in the contest (mainly from Pitesti and Costesti), each with an essay prepared by a team of 4-5 pupils, under the coordination of a teacher. The essays were presented during a one-day event, to which more than 100 people participated. Six of them were rewarded a prize (1st, 2nd, and 3rd place). The Arges Prefecture presented the history of EU citizenship together with an outline of civil, political and socio-economic rights.</p> <p><i>Impacts and Scope for Replication</i></p> <p>In terms of the impact of the Bulletin, at least 500 Arges County staff became familiar with the rights deriving from EU citizenship, as well as with the mechanism in place for enforcing these. Over 200 people were involved in the competition overall, including, pupils, teachers and participants to the conference, as well as representatives of the prefecture and other county councils.</p> <p>The impact of the competition was significant, in terms of establishing a two-way communication between citizens and the prefecture. Teachers and pupils who did not participate directly in the competition were made aware of the results (including at least 30 people per high-school, i.e. 510). The competition was widely covered in the national media and through this channel it reached at least 50.000 readers (50% of the readers of the three major newspapers in the county).</p>				

Project title	Country	Organiser/initiator	Duration	
			Start	Finish
Case Study 19: Europe and its citizens. A dialogue” – A campaign on EU matters and rights.	Romania	Romanian National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux	2008	2010
<p><i>Main Aims and Target Group</i></p> <p>A dialogue was developed by the Romanian National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux (NACAB), in close collaboration with a wide range of Local Authorities in Romania and the German Konrad Adenauer Foundation. The dialogue was carried out in 2010 and was actually a continuation of a similar initiative implemented in 2008 entitled „Citizens Forums“. The campaign aimed to inform Romanian citizens on European matters and especially on rights, but also on obligations deriving from their newly acquired EU citizenship. The target group of the campaign consisted of common citizens (i.e. pupils, students, NGOs, LRAs, elderly). Particular emphasis was placed on multipliers, e.g. teachers and local associations, which could forward the information to citizens other than participants in the forums.</p> <p><i>Description</i></p> <p>During the campaign, 23 ‘Citizens’ debates’ were held in the following municipalities: Focsani, Timisoara, Piatra Neamt, Nehoiu, Simeria, CampiaTurzii, TarguNeamt, Buzau, Berghin, Satu Mare, Brasov, Jimbolia, Alba Iulia, Tiganesti, Pitesti, Braila, Lipova, Roman, Arad, Bucuresti, Sibiu, Sf. Gheorghe, Gheorgheni. It is important to mention that almost half of these 23 cities are small and medium municipalities and three are communes, thus the campaign went deeper than the largest municipality (county capital level). At the same time, the involvement of the LRAs needs to be underlined: firstly, the city councils, city halls or prefectures made available their premises or other closed public spaces for the debates. More important, the representatives of the hosting LRAs actively participated in each of the 23 debates as speakers (e.g. Lipova, Piatra Neamt). The debates focused on several topics related to EU institutions and rights. The format facilitated maximum interaction between the speakers and the participants. This framework led to intense discussions on new issues such as the European Citizens’ Initiative, the petition right and background on the transparency and accountability of the European Parliament, EU Ombudsman (e.g. Timisoara). However, during the debates some topics were more relevant to the participants than others. For example, a detailed discussion took place on the right to good administration. Overall, the participants were highly engaged and, as the organisers mention, sometimes even astonished by the information they received on their rights deriving from EU citizenship and the possibility given by some European institutions to enforce them (in a context where it seems that only the European Court of Human Rights was known). The participating representatives of the LRAs were particularly satisfied by the information circulated and detailed during the debates, as these were instrumental for their activity within the county/city and for linking this with the relevant EU governance level.</p> <p><i>Impacts and Scope for Replication</i></p> <p>In terms of impact, it seems that a small investment (of approximately 1000 euros/debate to which volunteer work and free of charge location needs to be added) brought significant results. Firstly, more than 900 direct participants in the debates increased their knowledge on EU institutions and citizenship’s rights. Secondly, the campaigns had a wide impact in the local mass media, several articles being presented in the local newspapers before and after each debate (except Bucharest). As mentioned before, the project had a multiplier effect by inviting participants who could spread the word, (i.e. professors and NGOs) and distributing materials on EU matters and rights during and after the debates. Overall, the campaign created an opportunity for further dialogue and cooperation initiatives, between citizens and city hall (e.g. Lipova, Arad) as well as similar events that were planned to be organised in cooperation with organisations such as Europe Direct and the public libraries network in the country (targeting pupils).</p>				

3.3.4. Right to free movement and residence

There are various ways in which LRAs promote the right to free movement and residence among EU citizens. As mentioned in the previous sections EU citizens still face numerous obstacles when exercising this right.

- Educational projects focusing on target groups that are potentially mobile, in particular young people;
- Cross-border initiatives - projects to encourage EU citizens to travel, work and study in others Member States' regions or municipalities.
- Cooperation with NGOs -the third group of best practices involves initiatives developed by NGOs working at the local and regional level.

(i) Educational projects focusing on young people

The first group of best practices implemented by LRAs involves educational projects focusing on youth, encouraging them to exercise their right to free movement and residence. These projects are particularly important for the promotion of EU citizenship and citizens' rights.

Through various exchange, scholarship programmes and twinning projects among municipalities young EU citizens are given the possibility to discover and understand other local and regional cultures which should encourage them to exercise in future their right to free movement and residence (by living, studying and working) in another Member State.

Project title	Country	Organiser/initiator	Duration	
			Start	Finish
Case Study 20: Twinning project - youth training	France	Lille, Roubaix and Pévèle-Mélantois - Carembault (LRA)	2006	2007
<p><i>Main Aims and Target Group</i></p> <p>The municipalities of Lille, Roubaix and Pévèle – Mélantois - Carembault have developed a service for public local organisations of the Nord-Pas-de-Calais, which aimed to raise their awareness of European issues, by organizing training activities conveyed information on European programmes and encouraged the setting up of projects supporting the transnational mobility of young workers. The activities were directly promoted at local level and in local job centres. Around 160 young people living in the most deprived areas of the participating municipalities were supported.</p> <p><i>Description</i></p> <p>The service allows the participating organisations to include a European dimension to training activities targeting local youths from deprived communities. The service aims to develop municipality-level organisations as contact points for businesses and other potential employers across the EU to help disadvantaged youths gain professional experience abroad and learn about a different culture but also to attract disadvantaged youths from other countries to benefit from professional experience in the Nord-Pas-de-Calais region.</p> <p><i>Impacts and Scope for Replication</i></p> <p>As a result of funding from the Regional Council of Nord-Pas-de-Calais, all of the public local organisations in the region have been able to benefit from assistance in setting up projects relating to European mobility. It also provided unique opportunity for LRAs' staff to receive training to set up similar initiatives. By providing information on the possibilities in different regions and EU MS, the project also allowed LRAs to introduce different local groups to the right of free movement and residence.</p> <p>The project provides a common service, which contributed to the setting up of various projects in the context of a European mobility scheme whereby young Europeans can meet and exchange perspectives on various subjects relating to professional life. For example, in 2006 the Arras municipality organised a Franco-Polish exchange where young people would be encouraged to exchange perspectives and ideas on their professional future on the themes of sport and leisure through team-building activities.</p>				

Project title	Country	Organiser/initiator	Duration	
			Start	Finish
Case Study 21: Student exchange and scholarships	Spain	Logroño (LRA)	1992	-

Main Aims and Target Group

The main aim of the campaign is to **increase and encourage young people to take part in exchange programmes**. The initiative targets young citizens between 14 and 18 years old.

Description

The municipality of Logroño has supported a student exchange programme and scholarships for more than 20 years with more than 400 young people participating per annum (aged between 14 and 18 years old). The young people stay in twin towns or sister cities (Dax and Libourne, two French municipalities). These exchanges are for two months, between May and August each year, in six cities in France, Germany, Italy and Britain. Scholarships (€2,500) are also made available to young people between 18 and 30 who are unemployed.

Impacts and Scope for Replication

The programme has proved to be successful over 20 years and the number of participants continues to increase each year. The number of grant applications increase each year due to positive feedback from previous participant, which demonstrates that the programme is sustainable. An important sign of the success of the programme is that some of the young people have gone on to complete higher education and have gained employment in European cities where the exchange takes place.

Project title	Country	Organiser/initiator	Duration	
			Start	Finish
Case Study 22: GOAL-Granting opportunities for Active Learning – improving the citizens’ panel methodology	Hungary	Association of Local Democracy Agencies	2011	2011

Main Aims and Target Group

In 2011, the project GOAL-Granting opportunities for Active Learning included up to 2500 citizens from Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, France, Italy, Macedonia and Romania in twelve panels, with the aim to **discuss the effects of internal and third country migration (immigration/emigration) on their local communities**.

Description

The twelve **citizens’ panels** included as members around 30 immigrants, representatives of local authorities and other stakeholders as well as regular citizens per panel. Training took place in Strasbourg, and further meetings/ workshops in Kastoria and Bucharest.

The twelve citizens panels led to the publication of recommendations addressed to public policy makers in five major fields: intercultural dialogue, administrative procedures, labour market, political participation and housing. In each field, the panels have identified problems, objectives and made propositions to improve the situation of mobile EU citizens in Europe. The total budget was EUR 172,000, out of which 60% was EU co-funding and 40% co-funding from lead applicant and partners.

Impacts and Scope for Replication

The methodology of citizens' panels can be used for any other relevant issue, such as the citizens' involvement for the European Parliament elections, the use of European citizens' rights, etc. More recently, ALDA³¹ has started with the implementation of another project: COHEIRS – Civic Observers for Health and Environment: Initiative for Responsibility and Sustainability.

The citizens' panels are a user-friendly tool for local and regional authorities, which allow them to liaise with relevant groups of citizens that do not act in an organised manner and to foster greater participation of citizens living on their territory. The overall outcomes of the citizens’ panels are the drafting of the recommendations that were largely distributed to EU Institutions, LRAs and other organisations interested and working on the topics of concern.

³¹Association of Local Democracy Agencies.

(ii) Cross – border cooperation

The second group of best practices implemented by LRAs presents cross-border initiatives. These projects are particularly important as they offer different channels for LRAs to encourage EU citizens to travel, work and study in others Member States’ regions or municipalities. By creating effective information centres, networks and projects, LRAs are able to promote new opportunities and to more effectively address the interests and needs of local citizens.

Project title	Country	Organiser/initiator	Duration	
			Start	Finish
Case Study 23: Cross-border regional cooperation to promote and welcome citizens from neighbourhood country	Germany	City of Krefeld (LRA)	2009	2011
<p><i>Main Aims and Target Group</i> The City of Krefeld is a part of the euregio which covers nearby areas of Germany and the Netherlands. To promote cross-border collaboration, the City authorities provide information and advice (through consultations) on the local and regional labour market, education and training, and business opportunities as well as enterprises, job opportunities, Universities programmes and schools. Information is provided for citizens on both sides of the border.</p> <p><i>Description</i> Consultations take place with EURES staff in the euregio offices of Viersen and Grefrath. The consultations are open to all citizens. Information on the situation of the labour market is published online in German and Dutch language. There is also a special telephone line in both languages to provide information and advice. The telephone lines are open every day and special consultations for cross-border labour occur twice a month in Venlo or in Kleve. The consultation are funded through EURES initiative. Information with regard to the consultations and euregio activities are also available on the official website of the City of Krefeld.</p> <p><i>Main Impacts and Scope for Replication</i> The consultations has been successful in making EU citizens aware of their right to free movement and residence and are keen to participate and gain additional information from the consultations. Approximately 100 citizens (on both sides) participate in the consultation each month. The initiative and euregio bureau is co-founded by the EU. The EURES web portal was highly welcomed as a growing number of Dutch citizens commute as employees and students on a daily and weekly basis to Germany. There is also a large number of German citizens attending Dutch universities and participating in the local labour market.</p>				

Project title	Country	Organiser/initiator	Duration	
			Start	Finish
Case Study 24: Twinning exchanges	Wales	Cardiff city council (LRA)	2005	-
<p><i>Main Aims and Target Group</i> The exchange framework initiative aims to facilitate the free movement of EU citizens between different communities within the EU Member States.</p> <p><i>Description</i> Cardiff has a number of international links with other cities, both in Europe and internationally. Two European cities that it maintains close links with are Stuttgart in Germany and Nantes in France. Cardiff runs an exchange programme with Stuttgart, which provides a unique framework for facilitating the free movement of EU citizens between local communities of aforementioned Member States. The exchange includes secondary, tertiary and higher educational exchanges as well as sporting, youth, cultural and community activities. The exchanges also involved professional study visits in which representatives from Cardiff exchanged experiences with their counterparts in Stuttgart in areas such as waste management, planning, and community safety. A similar link has been maintained with the French city of Nantes. Exchanges of significant numbers of secondary, tertiary and higher education students continue to occur each year. For example, in 2005 an exchange also took place for horticultural apprentices.</p> <p><i>Impacts and Scope for Replication</i> An active cooperation with communities in different EU countries enables Cardiff to exchange knowledge on a wide range of matters including cultural activities, environmental action and the improvement of language skills. It also opens possibilities for the creation of trade links and the sharing of expertise. Twinning enriches the life of the community and promotes racial and religious tolerance, international understanding and respect for others.</p>				

Project title	Country	Organiser/initiator	Duration	
			Start	Finish
Case Study 25: Ibermovilitas	Spain	Bordering Autonomous Communities	2010	2011
<p><i>Main Aims and Target Group</i> The objective of this programme is to foster cross-border labour mobility of citizens between Spain and Portugal, through the design of active employment policies that help remove the existing barriers to mobility.</p> <p><i>Description</i> The programme achieves its objectives by organising professional training and joint work between the employment offices and centres on both sides of the border. It provides cross-border labor market analysis and identifying opportunities for mobility and a common design of concrete actions to overcome existing barriers to mobility; implementation of the pilot project in the four areas of cooperation aimed at facilitating the cross-border labor insertion; and empowerment of the joint work of offices and employment centers and transfer of results. The total cost of this initiative, which is financed by the Spain-Portugal Cross-Border Cooperation Programme and by the European Regional Development Fund, was €2,280,300.</p> <p><i>Impacts and Scope for Replication</i> The report of activities on the project outlines the main results and impacts of the programme. Regarding the direct impacts on the target group of the programme (unemployed people), a total of 139 people, 59 men and 80 women participated in cross-border integration activities (88% of the men and 81% of the women who participated completed the activities successfully). Of the total participants, 34 people found work after completion of the programme (13 men and 21 women in 2010 - 11). Thus, the placement rate is around 25%. A total of 84 companies participated in the project (including 72 Portuguese companies) while the number originally forecast was 48. A survey conducted in the framework of the external evaluation of the programme showed the high degree of satisfaction of participants who emphasized its usefulness in finding employment.</p>				

Project title	Country	Organiser/initiator	Duration	
			Start	Finish
Case Study 26: Different Views, Hexham Youth Initiative	UK	Hexham Council (LRA)	2004	-
<p><i>Main Aims and Target Group</i></p> <p>The project aimed to give disadvantaged young people in Tynedale the opportunity to widen their horizons and increase their employment opportunities by encouraging them to participate in Youth Councils, the National Youth Parliament and local councils and forums. There was also an important European dimension. The project was aimed specifically at unemployed young people. By taking part in the project, the participants could gain certificates and valuable work experience. Participants' work placements included working at a children's centre helping to organise activities for the children. There were plenty of social activities organised for the group to get involved in their free time. The group also went on cultural visits to Krakow, Auschwitz Prison Camp and Warsaw.</p> <p><i>Description</i></p> <p>The project was run by Hexham Youth Initiative (a charity organisation working at the local level), and worked with groups of disadvantaged young people and individuals aged 13–19, encouraging them to become more involved in local and national youth projects and in European citizenship. The project included the development of cultural exchange opportunities including exchange visits to Europe. Hexham has organized a number of European Exchanges over the past 10 years including 2 exchanges to Seville between 2004 and 2007. These were funded by the Hexham Youth Initiative and co-funded by EU programme funding.</p> <p>The project shares information about opportunities for young people to get involved in the democratic process in Britain and Europe, provides training of peer educators, and includes the development of a dedicated website. The project also set up the Work Away Programme, which sent young people to Italy, Poland and Sweden. This was funded through the Leonardo programme. The local Town Council helped fund the core costs of the Work Away Programme. Youth Work Practitioners from the Hexham project have also been involved in exchanges to France and Italy through the Grundtvig programme.</p> <p>The project enabled disadvantaged young people to develop their understanding of the democratic process in Britain and Europe. It also developed an interactive programme about the UK government and British electoral system that can be used with young people from years nine and ten. The interactive programme developed resources that can be used in a variety of groups together with an information pack of easy-to-use resources and materials (English language only) that can be photocopied and used elsewhere.</p> <p>The project aimed to involve at least 60 young people and 30 voluntary and statutory agencies. Eighty-seven young people aged 13–19 took part in the project, 60 of whom were disadvantaged. A number of young people became members of various national, regional and local youth forums and remained so after the project ended. Attendees took part in three different training courses (Peer Support, Young People and Research, and Young Movers course). Participants got involved in campaigning on different issues, including 'Votes at 16', which is a campaign made up of young people, organisations and network of politicians across the UK to promote political engagement. A grant of £49,495 was awarded in April 2003 under the Prince's Trust European Programme and the project ran for two years from April 2003 to March 2005. Trips to other EU countries were co-funded by the Grundtvig programme and Leonardo programme.</p> <p><i>Impact and Scope for Replication</i></p> <p>Involving the local council in the project meant that young people were given an insight into how their local council worked and the opportunity to meet the people who worked for the council. Also consulting young people and providing feedback throughout the project meant that they felt more involved and that their views were valued. Support for the project was vital in allowing the young participants to exchange views and gain a stronger awareness of how local government functions and how they can influence decisions. In August 2003, two project members went to a consultation workshop 'Your Future – Your Choice', hosted by the British Youth Council in London, to give their views on post-16 year olds education, training and employment options.</p>				

Project title	Country	Organiser/initiator	Duration	
			Start	Finish
Case Study 27: Cross-Border Office for Youth Emancipation	Spain	Extremadura (LRA)	2009	2010
<p><i>Main aim and target group</i> The aim of the Youth Emancipation Cross-Border Office is to facilitate and encourage education and labour mobility for young people in Spain and Portugal, targeting 16 – 35 years old, as well as to provide them with the necessary training and access to housing.</p> <p><i>Description</i> This is done in a personalised manner by email, telephone and face-to-face at the Emancipation Office located in Caceres (Extremadura) and also with the support of other offices to support youth emancipation located in the cities of Plasencia, Mérida and Badajoz. This is a public initiative, started up by the Youth Institute (INJUVE), Portuguese Youth Institute (IPJ) and the Junta of Extremadura through the Regional Ministry of Youth and Sport. The office provides an integral service both physically and virtually (through its website) where the user can obtain all the information and tools necessary to take the step towards mobility. The advice is provided in Spanish and Portuguese and with a commitment to answer questions within 48 working hours. It also has a telephone service.</p>				
<p><i>Main Impacts and Scope for Replication</i> In its first year of activity (2009) 320 queries of young people regarding cross-border mobility issues were attended, reaching 400 queries in 2010. This initiative provided young people with an efficient source of information on cross-border movement that has been difficult to obtain. In addition it also enabled parties to have a detailed insight in the most restrict matters with relation to free movement between Spain and Portugal that can be addressed in the future.</p>				

Project title	Country	Organiser/initiator	Duration	
			Start	Finish
Case Study 28: ‘Muévetepor Europa’ - Online course to promote the right to free movement in the European Union.	Spain	Europe Direct A Coruña (EU)	2009	-
<p><i>Main Aims and Target Group</i> The project aimed to provide information about the opportunities for mobility in the European Union and to promote the free movement of students and graduates between the Member States. The course exclusively targeted students and post-graduates from the University of Corunna (aged between 18 and 30 year old) and it is free of charge.</p> <p><i>Description</i> The course is organized by Europe Direct A Coruña, which is the official information center of the European Commission regarding the Provincial Council of A Coruña, and the Centre for Employment & Entrepreneurship at the University of A Coruña. The course provided a forum to exchange information, opinions and ideas between the participants.</p> <p><i>Main Impacts and Scope for Replication</i> The project received very positive reviews from participants. According to the Final Report of the initiative, which included a satisfaction questionnaire, most of the participants indicated that after the completion of the course, they would be willing to study or work abroad and would recommend the course to others. Most participants indicated that the course allowed them to find opportunities for mobility that they did not know before the completion of the course. A course was organized exclusively for technical staff working with young people (including, staff of youth information centers and libraries, labor counselors and staff of the University). In this case the course aimed to provide fundamental knowledge about mobility opportunities in the EU and to promote the active participation of staff in the exercise of free movement between different Member States.</p>				

Project title	Country	Organiser/initiator	Duration	
			Start	Finish
Case Study 29: ‘Cities on the rise’: Adaptation of the economic strategy of the North Austrian and South Bohemian regions through networking and coordination	Austria and Czech Republic	Northern Austria and South Bohemia (LRA)	2011	2013
<p><i>Main Aims and Target Group</i></p> <p>The project, which started in July 2011 and will end in December 2013, aims to strengthen and steer the economic development of small towns in Northern Austria and the neighboring Czech region of South Bohemia. The main target groups are the companies in the participating small towns which receive professional guidance from a dedicated business coordinator. The business coordinator is a local official chosen by the city he represents. Networking among the partner cities is meant to create more cross-border business opportunities. The overall objective is to improve the economic development of the cross-border region to ensure that companies can better operate in the local market and achieve a high standard a value as well as create additional jobs.</p> <p><i>Description</i></p> <p>Cities participating in the project benefit from a specialty trained business coordinator who plans their strategic economic development. Together with the relevant politicians at city level, the business coordinator designs an economic strategy focused on the different cities’ strengths. The cities themselves have to network with each other in order to avoid competition and to exploit synergy opportunities. The networking is facilitated through an internet platform and a contacts database, which gathers information on relevant regional economic experts and businessmen.</p> <p><i>Impact and Scope for Replication</i></p> <p>With better economic strategies and a wider mix of companies networking together, the supply of goods has improved and the number of jobs created has increased. This has encouraged cross-border mobility among young workers in the region. Each participating city has created an information brochure and disseminated it to interested parties, including young workers and businesses. Each city customizes its advertising material according to its chosen strategic focus.</p> <p>Some of the intended results are already visible. The participating cities have adapted their business strategies on their own specific strengths. There is a high level of networking among the cities as to possibilities of developing synergies to strengthen local businesses. The internet platform and the personal contacts database set up during the project are widely used. The project has scope for replication in other cross-border areas.</p>				

Project title	Country	Organiser/initiator	Duration	
			Start	Finish
Case Study 30: DECISIVE Project: Development of Cypriot Twinning Capacities through active Volunteering	Cyprus	Union of Cyprus Municipalities	2010	2010
<p>In 2010, the Union of Cyprus Municipalities received funding through the “Europe for Citizens” programme for the training of Cypriot volunteers to support the development of twinning with towns in other European countries.</p> <p><i>Main Aims and Target Group</i> The project lasted for 12 months. Its aim was to remove obstacles to successful town twinning in Cyprus such as the lack of general information on town twinning and the lack of qualified municipal personnel.</p> <p><i>Description</i> In order to achieve its aim the project adopted a similar methodology used in Flanders, which encourages citizens to voluntarily prepare and run twinning partnerships. Three training sessions for volunteers and municipal officials were run in Cyprus and Belgium. The project results were disseminated to four main target groups, which included twinning officers, local politicians, twinning stakeholders and the wider public. Two information sessions for Twinning Officers of Cypriot Municipalities were organised in 2010. The sessions informed the twinning officers about the "Europe for Citizens" programme and the town twinning projects (DECISIVE and SKILLS). The project was also communicated to all the Municipal Councils of Cyprus and Chios as well as to the Annual General Assembly of the Union of Cyprus Municipalities. President of the Republic of Cyprus and members of the Ministerial Council attended this event, which significantly increased the visibility of the project in the electronic and printed media. Informational material was distributed to the public at two events that were organized for the Day of Europe. The first one was organised on the occasion of the "European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion", by the European Institute of Cyprus, the European Parliament Office in Cyprus, the European Commission Representation in Cyprus, the Press and Information Office (PIO) and the Municipality of Limassol and consisted of a series of events in the framework of the celebrations of the Week of Europe, which took place from 3 until 9 May in Limassol and Nicosia. After the second training session of November 2010, the project focused on the actual work of volunteers with the purpose to create new twinning projects. More detailed discussions took place between the Municipality of Lefkara (CY) and the Municipality of Oudenaarde (BE). By including citizens in the process and helping them understand the meaning and usefulness of twinning, the project revitalized some of the, currently inactive, twinning agreements of Cypriot Municipalities. Citizens that participated in twinning actions in the past undertook actions in order find out the current state of the twinning relations among the participants. The majority of Cypriot municipalities have revised their list of existing twinings and made specific actions in order to see whether non active twinings can be revitalised or whether they should be ended. The DECISIVE project enabled most municipalities (involved in the project) to appointed at least one officer to deal with twinning issues. The project trained them and helped them acquire new skills (filling-in of the Online Grant Application Form and project management). The project provided old and new twinning officers the possibility to visit the EACEA, and to resolve the problem of psychological distance between people working at the local level and European level. The project helped participants understand the meaning of active European Citizenship: citizens, local officials and local politicians working together for the same purpose and cooperating with other European regions that have the same problems and targets. In certain municipalities, the organised groups of citizens (mainly Youth Councils) undertook voluntary actions to get involved in the twinning processes. Volunteering was promoted through the development of specific skills for the participating volunteers. New skills (i.e. filling-in of the Online Grant Application Form and project management)</p>				

were developed not only among those who are responsible for twinning activities at a local level but also among ordinary citizens who learned how to work in collaboration with their local politicians and municipal officers.

The budget for the project was €96.000 (co-financed: €76,000 by the EU and €20,000 by the Union of Cyprus Municipalities).

Impacts and Scope for Replication

The DECISIVE project was the first of its kind to be implemented on a large scale in Cyprus. It gave to a few hundred Cypriot Citizens the chance to participate actively in a European project. The participants of the study visit had the possibility to shape the second training session that took place two weeks later in Cyprus. Some of them also had the opportunity to attend that second training session as speakers and trainers. Participants from organised groups took part by themselves the initiative to present the project and town twinning in general as well as organizing training sessions within their groups.

In some municipalities, the organized groups of citizens (mainly Youth Councils) undertook actions in order to get involved to the twinning processes. The DECISIVE project also helped elected representatives understand the importance of twinning. As a result of the project, most of the municipalities involved have appointed at least one officer, who deals with twinning issues. A network of municipal officers involved in twinning has been created. These officers have already met each other and have begun to cooperate and exchange ideas and opinions. The Union of Cyprus Municipalities is now aware of the European actions of its member municipalities.

The Union of Cyprus Municipalities can now take full advantage of the opportunities and possibilities provided by the Europe for Citizens programme. The DECISIVE project also enabled municipalities to get to improve their understanding of the needs of its members, regarding European programs, especially the process of data collection for the website of electronic networking. Project participants were given the opportunity to learn about the Support Measures and more generally the “Europe for Citizens” program from their two project partners. This helped to inform project partners about the methodology used in Flanders and benefit from the activities and contacts of the project.

(iii) Cooperation with NGOs

The third group of best practices implemented at the local and regional level, involves initiatives developed by Non-Governmental Organisations working at the local and regional level. These projects are particularly important, as in most cases they are initiated by local civil society groups and aim to include LRAs.

Project title	Country	Organiser/initiator	Duration	
			Start	Finish
Case Study 31: Empowering European Citizens	Sweden	Centrum för Publikt Entreprenörskap (NGO)	2011	2011
<p><i>Main Aims and Target Group</i></p> <p>The project aimed to contribute to social change within communities and sustainable development by establishing an enduring international network of leaders who as influencers in their communities dialogue, learn and act together to address global issues. It involved European citizens from youth, women's, cultural, recreational, and religious groups, as well as NGOs and local authorities.</p> <p>The project took place in 2011 and involved civil society organisations in Sweden, Finland, Croatia, Estonia, Hungary, Romania, Poland, Slovakia, Macedonia and the Czech Republic. The project incorporated the British Council's global project Active Citizens core framework.</p> <p>The project also aimed to increase the contribution of European citizens who already play a role in their local communities, through civic engagement with community-based organisations and projects. The project also empowered European citizens by reinforcing a strong sense of local culture and identity, understanding of local community, a sense of responsibility towards sustainable development, values for working effectively with difference, and by developing project planning and management skills.</p> <p><i>Description</i></p> <p>A key feature of the project included pan-European training workshops which focused on achieving a better understanding of the local community for European citizens. Participants in the project cascaded the knowledge gained during the training on a voluntary basis to members of their home organisation and communities within their municipality.</p> <p><i>Impacts and Scope for Replication</i></p> <p>Civil society organisations from 10 countries were involved in the project. This enabled the project partners to increase their capacity to manage project activities, networks of contacts across Europe and their ability to link their local agendas to the European level. Working together on the project enabled them to share local best practice internationally, as well as enabling them to gain a better understanding about how their local aims fit into the wider picture in Europe.</p> <p>20 trainers from 10 European countries were equipped with a methodology to promote European citizenship, intercultural dialogue and social activism. Event trainers were familiarised with the project methodology, such as Appreciative Inquiry, Systems Thinking, and sustainable community development. The trainers also adapted activities to the European and local context, and customised training content to increase their ability to co-organise training events. During the delivery of the European Training Events, with support and feedback from their peers, trainers developed their skills and provided support to participants in their cascading activities.</p> <p>Contacts made during the event were reinforced by e-networking opportunities. Participants also met local partners, journalists and local government representatives. The training enabled the participants to understand the concept of intercultural dialogue and how to foster better relations between different communities. The project also looked at best practice in leadership and social activism to understand how the participants own values could be reconciled with European ones, and the potential of their actions to impact beyond their municipality, at European level.</p> <p>3000 community members from municipalities in 10 countries in Europe increased their awareness of the concept of European citizenship and acquired tools to empower them to take an active role at the level of their municipality. More importantly, participants gained practical tools in events such as 4D Cycle and Big Goals Need Big Change to support activism in their municipality, and to better understand the wider European context within which they operate.</p>				

3.3.5. Right to complain to EU Ombudsman and Petition the EP

Project title	Country	Organiser/initiator	Duration	
			Start	Finish
Case Study 32: European Ombudsman Visit	Italy	National Association of Italian Municipalities	2009	2009
<p><i>Main Aims and Target Group</i> The aim of ANCI is to represent and safeguard the municipalities' interests by, lobbying parliament, the government, regions, and Italian public administration and EU bodies.</p> <p><i>Description</i> The EU Ombudsman met with regional authority representatives, including the President of the Sicilian Regional Council and the Mayor of Palermo, as well as wider members of the ANCI. The talks were focused on principles of transparency regarding information communicated by local authorities and public access to this type of information. The ANCI carries out a range of activities to support municipalities' interests including the following: providing consultancy to municipalities; participates in the Italian Agency for Contractual Representation in the Public Sector; promotes studies and research on issues that affect municipalities and metropolitan cities, the public sector; facilitates initiatives to disseminate knowledge of institutions, to improve civic education and to encourage the participation of citizens in municipal life; and, encourages and co-ordinates the activities of ANCI members in the fields of international relations and co-operation. ANCI's activities and political autonomy are guaranteed membership fees, part of which goes to the 20 Regional Associations, which have statutory autonomy. ANCI invited the European Ombudsman to Palermo for an event to raise awareness about his work in June 2009. The aim of the exchanges was to provide a comprehensive overview of the rights of citizens to complain to the Ombudsman 'citizen empowerment' and of principles of good administration as well focusing on the complementarities between local Ombudsman and courts.</p>				
<p><i>Impact and Scope for Replication</i> All of these visits were extremely valuable in terms of raising awareness about citizens' rights under EU law, increasing the public profile of the European Ombudsman and his national counterparts, and providing information about the right to complain.</p>				

Project title	Country	Organiser/initiator	Duration	
			Start	Finish
Case Study 33: EuroPetition initiative	Italy	Trans-European Local Authority service	2010	2010
<p><i>Main Aims and Target Group</i></p> <p>The EuroPetition project piloted the implementation of a trans-European Local Authority service providing distributed citizen engagement and interaction with the European Parliament's PETI Petitions Committee and the European Citizens' Initiative. EuroPetition aimed to create a simple and scalable process for petitioning to achieve increased participation of citizens in EU issues and/or cross-border issues among EU countries.</p> <p><i>Description</i></p> <p>EuroPetition is a two-year eParticipation Programme that piloted the coordination and submission of local e-petitions and cross-border pan-European EuroPetitions to the European Parliament during 2010 from five regions working with clusters of 19 Local Authorities in Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and the UK, potentially involving over eight million citizens across the EU.</p> <p>Local authorities from the following countries took part in the project: Stockholm, Göteborg, Malmö, Linköping, Piteå (SE), Cordoba, Malaga, Abla (ES), Vicenza (IT) Hertogenbosch, Utrecht (NL), Birmingham, Bristol, Kingston, and North Lincolnshire (UK). The project has now drawn to a close and the network has continued on a self-funded basis since December 2010. The EuroPetition project was sponsored by the European Commission under EU eParticipation preparatory action. The open-source e-petitioner system was developed by Public-i from ITC's original system. The system supports coordination and submission of cross-border and pan-European EuroPetitions to local government and the European Parliament's Petition Committee. It showed how to strengthen and broaden citizens' participation in democratic decision-making and contribute to better legislation through applying the latest available innovative ICT.</p> <p><i>Impact and Scope for Replication</i></p> <p>The evaluation concluded that the EuroPetition project had met and often exceeded its objectives. It demonstrated that it is possible to promote the concept of e-petitions to widen and further understand citizen participation in contexts such as Spain where the petitioning concept is new. It has also demonstrated the proof of concept of a pan-European multilingual e-petitioning and eParticipation service which can help citizens forge connections with the European Parliament, reducing the democratic deficit across the EU.</p> <p>EuroPetition can help the European Parliament Petitions Committee to reduce their workload by preventing the submission of invalid petitions and taking advantage of local government to support the petitioning process. At the same time the process can support subsidiarity, increase transparency and citizen engagement.</p> <p>However, this can only happen if the Petitions Committee (i.e. made up of MEPs and the Secretariat) takes ownership of the process (by ensuring the provision of local support) and recognises the gains that it can make by proactively engaging with the petitioners at the beginning of the petition cycle to ensure that the petitions are clearly worded and formally respond to the concerns of European citizens. The Scottish and German Parliaments have shown that this can be done without restricting the citizens' ultimate right to petition.</p>				

Project title	Country	Organiser/initiator	Duration	
			Start	Finish
Case Study 34: Free, general information number (1700)	Belgium	Flanders (LRA)	2012	-
<p><i>Main aims and target group</i> The Flemish civil service has a free, general information number (1700) that people can call if they have questions about regulations, benefits, permits, tax and public services. The information number helps to better target European citizens' complaints to the EU Ombudsman. The Flanders region has decided to make this service available to citizens wishing to make a complaint to the Flemish Ombudsman.</p> <p><i>Description</i> Citizens asking for information from the civil service and citizens with a complaint addressed to the Ombudsman will be able to call 1700. Citizens who are to telephone the 1700 number with a complaint will be able to reach Ombudsman services much more easily. Furthermore, with the extension of the 1700 service to citizens with complaints, the Flemish Civil Service will be able to collect some critical information giving them an overview of the issues that citizens in Flanders complain most about.</p> <p><i>Impact and Scope for Replication</i> The service extension is to be launched in late 2012. There were some hesitations in the beginning about the Ombudsman working together with the civil service but both parties are convinced that it will enhance their outreach to citizens in the best possible way and their ability to deal with information and complaints in the best possible way. The 1700 service will be promoted and advertised at local level in municipalities all over Flanders. The Ombudsman is currently working on a communication strategy to promote the launch of the service to citizens.</p>				

3.4. Critical Comparison of Case Studies

This section provides a critical comparison of the case studies presented in the previous section.

Methodological Issues

Assessing the strengths and drawbacks of different types of measures to promote EU citizens' rights using the framework set out in Section 2 of this Report is difficult. Ultimately, the **key performance indicator for all measures is the extent to which interventions have a positive impact on target groups and lead to an increased take-up of EU citizens' rights.** However, as the cases studies demonstrate, **whilst 'outputs' (e.g. number of people receiving information) should be quite easily measured, this is less so with 'results' (using the same example, raised awareness of EU citizens' rights amongst target groups) and 'impacts' (an example might be a higher turnout at European Parliament elections).** There are several reasons for this: firstly, as again shown by the case studies, very few LRAs monitor the effects of interventions to raise awareness of EU citizens' rights; secondly, the impacts are by their very nature extremely difficult to measure because there are many factors that have an influence of which LRA initiatives are only one.

Thus, whilst most of the case studies demonstrate a high degree of relevance, in the absence of sufficient information on outcomes, the other criteria outlined in Section 2 to assess good practices – effectiveness, efficiency and or so on - are much more difficult to apply.

Below, a critical assessment of the case studies on different EU citizens' rights is provided, starting with electoral rights.

3.4.1. Electoral rights

Electoral rights associated with EU citizenship are promoted by LRAs through a range of interventions including educational initiatives and information campaigns.

As highlighted in the literature review, **EU citizens still face a number of obstacles with regard to electoral rights, which are often connected to factors such as lack of awareness of procedures, registration difficulties and language.** It is important that LRAs understand the problems faced by both nationals and other EU citizens in seeking to exercise their rights so that they can be effectively addressed. As demonstrated by the case studies, there are some very innovative and successful approaches to promoting EU citizens' rights. Some schemes have the specific target group of young people whilst others are more broadly focused.

The **EU-focused educational and interactive events** for pupils encourage young people to take an interest in active citizenship, both at the local and EU levels. For example, the campaign to raise awareness among pupils about the EP elections (Centre for Citizenship Education, PL), involved performing **simulations in which participants (pupils from different schools) were divided into groups and played the roles of politicians, spokespersons, journalists and election officials in a fictional European country.**

These initiatives promote EU electoral rights by engaging pupils and their parents in events, as well as creating a high level of awareness of voting rights in relation to the European Parliament and local elections.

These measures are particularly **relevant** to promotion of electoral rights as they attract **considerable interest from media organisations, schools, pupils, parents and NGOs.** There is clearly scope for these types of initiatives to be widely promoted by LRAs among other local and regional schools.

In terms of **efficiency**, the expenditure on such projects is generally quite modest as they are usually included in the school's curriculum and therefore their scale and promotion depends mainly on the engagement and commitment of teachers and the school administration.

A critical factor to improve effectiveness of this measure **is the willingness of teachers to play an active role in promoting EU citizenship and EU citizens' rights**, and to develop cooperation with local partners such as the Commission's Contact Points in the EU Member States which often have materials that can be used in schools and other educational establishments. Additionally, LRAs might encourage schools in their city or region to take an active part in promoting EU citizenship and EU citizens' rights and cooperate with representatives of EU Institutions on the ground.

Wider **information campaigns** and **information-related** events are also crucial to the promotion of electoral rights. There are various ways in which LRAs can successfully inform local and regional citizens about their electoral rights, including conferences, workshops, meetings with experts, registration databases, and the dissemination of leaflets, newsletters and bulletins.

The most effective measures include those which **engage citizens in an active dialogue with LRAs** (i.e. through conferences, workshops and brainstorming meetings). These measures provide a platform for nationals and residents to express their opinions and learn about their electoral rights. For example, the European Dialogues Conference (Alicante, Spain) provided an opportunity for dialogue between representatives of affected citizens, municipal governments, councils, residents associations and various experts to discuss issues affecting this group. In the latest edition, three panels were run that focused on the right to vote in municipal elections, the role of media and associations in the electoral process and the importance of active participation of non-national groups in elections.

As the case study examples show, **information campaigns usually reach a much bigger target group than more focused interventions such as events in schools**, and can therefore have a potentially big impact in increasing the number of registered voters in local and European elections. Such actions also increase interest in local politics among the targeted groups, which often leads to an increase in the number of citizens who participate in European elections, both as voters and as candidates for local and EP elections.

From the case studies, it can be concluded that the **least successful and effective measures are information campaigns based only on the dissemination of leaflets**. Although leaflets provide useful information and are usually distributed in the most populous parts of municipalities and regions, leaflets often do not reach the groups that they are intended for.

3.4.2. Right to free movement and residence

As with EU citizenship electoral rights, the right to free movement and residence is promoted by LRAs through several types of schemes – educational measures and other interventions such as awareness-raising events, but also through cross-border schemes such as town twinning. Again, there are schemes with very specific target groups, for example cross-border workers, as well as general awareness-raising measures.

Measures to promote awareness amongst young people of the right to free movement and residence, in particular, exchanges and scholarship programmes between EU regions and cities, have proved to be effective measures for promoting study and internship possibilities in other EU Member States. This encourages young people to think in terms of taking up opportunities. For example, the municipality of Logroño (Spain) has supported a student exchange programme and scholarships with more than 400 young people participating per annum. The number of grant applications increase each year due to positive feedback from previous participant. Some of the participants have gone on to complete higher education and have gained employment in European cities where their exchange took place. It seems that often the small-scale mobility projects, adopted at local, regional or national level, have the most decisive impact and contribute most to strengthening the European way of thinking, and promote active Union citizenship and democracy.

However, young people still face difficulties in participating in exchanges. These obstacles are mainly connected with the transferability of qualifications and grades gained during the exchange or scholarship.

Town twinning schemes provide useful exchanges of experiences between local communities in different regions of the EU, strengthening the scope for replication of the most successful initiatives in which local and regional authorities have promoted the right to

free movement and residence along with other EU citizens' rights. For example, Cardiff (Wales) runs an exchange programme with Stuttgart, which provides a unique framework for facilitating the free movement of EU citizens between these local communities. The exchanges also involved professional study visits in which representatives from Cardiff exchanged experiences with their counterparts in Stuttgart in areas such as waste management, planning, and community safety.

These types of projects are particularly efficient as the participating parties gain more insights into experiences provided by the town twinning partner than is typical with information dissemination activities of a more general nature. Such schemes also enable municipalities to improve their understanding of other European initiatives and programmes that are implemented in town twinning projects.

Cross-border schemes are similar in nature with a focus on providing advice and practical support on gaining access to employment, medical and other services in the regions of different countries. For example, the City of Krefeld is a part of the euregio which covers nearby areas of Germany and the Netherlands. To promote cross-border collaboration, the City authorities provide information and advice (through consultations) on the local and regional labour market, education and training, and business opportunities as well as enterprises, job opportunities, Universities programmes and schools. Information is provided for citizens on both sides of the border. Consultations take place with EURES staff.

As the case studies show, **some twinning and cross-border schemes are co-financed by the EU and organised within the scope of EU initiatives** (for example, the 'Europe for Citizens' programme, EUREG, INTERREG). More generally, such schemes provide a good opportunity for LRAs to promote their regions and cultures on a larger scale.

Different forms of twinning and cross-border projects that promote the right to free movement and residence are particularly effective as they help to reduce obstacles and red tape, especially by disseminating the various best practices and information regarding cross-border services, e.g. in the area of health. The case study descriptions suggest that focused measures of this sort receive good coverage in the local and national media and are particularly effective. Such measures enable participants to gain a detailed insight to important issues, sometimes in the form of customised information and advice, related to free movement.

In terms of the efficiency of twinning and cross-border schemes, their implementation helps to foster **new economic initiatives within regions**. Due to a wider combination of local/regional institutions and companies networking together, regional economic strategies can be improved, which can result in an increase in the number of jobs created. This encourages cross-border mobility among workers in the region. The participating cities and regions adopt their business strategies on their own specific strengths. There should be a high level of networking among cities in order to increase the development of synergies to strengthen local and regional businesses.

In most Member States, NGOs play a key role in the implementation of EU legislation in the areas of labour law, health and safety at work, gender equality and non-discrimination. As shown in the case studies, **NGOs also have a role in promoting EU citizens' rights**. In most Member States, NGOs play a key role in the implementation of EU legislation in the areas of labour law, health and safety at work, gender equality and non-discrimination. These are all issues that are especially relevant to those wishing to take advantage of the right to free

movement and residence. The case studies highlight many good examples of projects initiated by NGOs with the support of LRAs to promote these rights by facilitating the take up of key services in the ‘destination’ regions.

3.4.3. Right to Complain to EU Ombudsman and Petition the European Parliament

The case studies suggest that the **common way of promoting awareness of the right to complain to the European Ombudsman and the regional Ombudsman are conferences and workshops** with the representatives of the European Ombudsman’s office. For example, ANCI invited the European Ombudsman to Palermo for an event to provide a comprehensive overview of the rights of citizens to complain to the Ombudsman ‘citizen empowerment’ and of principles of good administration.

These types of projects have been organised by various LRAs and provide local communities with the opportunity to learn about the Ombudsman’s role. Events such as these also provided a platform to inform the public about the role and limitations of the Ombudsman (e.g. that the European Ombudsman can only deal with complaints concerning the EU administration and not with complaints about national, regional, or local administrations, even when the complaints concern EU matters).

As a result of such conferences and workshops, the number of complaints has been reduced. However, as shown by the survey results (Section 3.1), **there is still very little awareness of the Ombudsman’s role among European citizens**, but also among LRAs themselves and measures to promote the right to complain the Ombudsman are not sufficient to make a difference in this respect. As the case study research showed, there is an insufficient number of measures to promote the right to Petition the European Parliament.

3.4.4. Vertical and horizontal dimension of projects promoting EU citizenship and citizens’ rights

In Section 1, we suggested that a fundamental distinction could be made between ‘vertical’ and ‘horizontal’ dimensions in the implementation of different types of measures to promote EU citizens’ rights. To summarise, the vertical dimension relates to the various levels of governance (EU, national, regional and local) while the horizontal dimension relates to different types of stakeholders that are potential LRA partners in the implementation of measures (other LRAs, NGOs, educational establishments, private sector, etc.). We suggested that ideally, schemes to promote EU citizens’ rights should combine both dimensions to achieve maximum effectiveness. The following table categorises the case studies in these terms:

Table 3.10: List of Case Studies

Key: V = vertical; H = horizontal; C = combined vertical and horizontal

No.	Case Studies (Name)	V	H	C
1	Active citizenship – What is your approach? ‘Youth in action’ Programme			√
2	Citizens’ panel’s methodology among LRAs: E-panels: fostering citizens’ participation and volunteering in a wider Europe			√
3	Active European Citizenship: awareness raising and training, citizens’ panels (e-panels) and active learning.		√	
4	ALL.4.EU: Citizens for Europe		√	
5	ALL.4.EU: Citizens for Europe		√	
6	Being Citizens in Europe		√	
7	Young people from Sweden and Portugal learn more about democracy			√
8	Classes to promote knowledge about EU integration among pupils			√
9	Information program with a focus on young people in the lead up to the 2009 European Parliament Elections		√	
10	Campaign to raise awareness amongst pupils of EP elections			√
11	Conceptualizing European identity through common historical cultural heritage		√	
12	Information campaign	√		
13	Information campaign to increase participation of Polish and Portuguese communities in the EP, and other elections		√	
14	European Information Campaign: ‘The right to vote as a structural element of European citizenship’	√		
15	Information activities - LRAs elections closer to citizens	√		
16	European Dialogues Conference		√	
17	Campaign to raise awareness of EP elections		√	
18	Distribution of information on EU affairs and rights to the country’s population	√		
19	Europe and its citizens. A dialogue” – A campaign on EU matters and rights.		√	
20	Twinning project - youth training		√	
21	Student exchange and scholarships			
22	GOAL-Granting opportunities for Active Learning – improving the citizens’ panel methodology		√	
23	Cross-border regional cooperation to promote and welcome citizens from neighbourhood country		√	
24	Twinning exchanges		√	
25	Ibermovilitas	√		√
26	Different Views, Hexham Youth Initiative		√	
27	Cross-Border Office for Youth Emancipation		√	
28	‘Muévetepor Europa’ - Online course to promote the right to free movement in the European Union.		√	
29	‘Cities on the rise’: Adaptation of the economic strategy of the North Austrian and South Bohemian regions through networking and coordination		√	
30	DECISIVE Project: Development of Cypriot Twinning Capacities through active Volunteering		√	
31	Empowering European Citizens		√	
32	European Ombudsman Visit			√
33	EuroPetition initiative	√		
34	Free, general information number (1700)		√	

4. Strategic Framework for LRA Promotion of EU Citizenship

4.1. Overview

This section sets out the key features of a strategy for LRA promotion of EU citizens' rights. The strategic framework draws on good practices identified through the research and wider experience. It consists of four main steps:

- **Step 1 – Baseline assessment** – to assess the current situation;
- **Step 2 – Development of strategy** – the measures to improve the situation;
- **Step 3 – Implementation framework** – how the measures will be implemented;
- **Step 4 – Monitoring and evaluation** – how progress will be measured.

Below we outline each of these steps in more detail.

The benefits of a strategic framework of the type outlined in this section lie in enhancing the coherence of measures, facilitating prioritisation and an appropriate allocation of human and financial resources, and ensuring that LRAs and partner organisations work efficiently together with a strong set of shared objectives. These and other factors should help ensure that interventions achieve greater impacts than is likely if projects are pursued on an individual and unconnected basis.

It is recognised that LRAs generally have very limited, if any, resources to devote to promoting EU citizenship and citizens' rights given the constraints on budgets and other more pressing priorities associated with the economic downturn in Europe. It may therefore be that a modified and perhaps more streamlined version of the strategy has to be adopted.

4.2. Step 1 - Baseline Assessment

It is important that any strategy to promote EU citizens' rights in a locality or region is based on an understanding of the current situation. The baseline assessment should examine:

- **Target groups** - the main target groups in the region and where the population groups are concentrated geographically;
- **Existing levels of awareness and take-up** - the extent to which the different target groups are already aware of and exercising their EU citizens' rights;
- **Effectiveness of existing measures** to encourage people to exercise their EU citizens' rights, problems and shortcomings.

In all EU Member States, the target group for measures to promote EU citizens' rights is likely to consist of both nationals of the country concerned and non-nationals living in it who are nationals of other Member States. **Measures aimed at nationals** could involve general awareness-raising with few if any interventions aimed at specific groups (an exception could be young people). The main target group, however, is likely to be **non-nationals**, particularly in relation to the right to vote in EP and municipal elections.

Examples of target groups from the research

- The school classes to promote knowledge about EU integration in Wroclaw (Case study 8) targeted **young people aged 12- 14 years old**.
- The information campaign in the Islas Baleares (Case study 12, ES) sought to make **EU citizens from other Member States** aware of the necessary voter registration form and to increase the number of registered EU citizens on census, which allows them to participate in elections.
- The EURES scheme in the Germany-Netherlands euroregion targeted the growing number of **Dutch citizens commuting as employees and students** on daily and weekly basis to Germany (Case study 23)

Taking the second point above, the extent to which the **right to vote in EP and municipal elections** is already being exercised is not straightforward to determine due to the way other EU nationals are registered in cities and regions.

It may, however, be more difficult to determine the situation in relation to other EU citizens' rights. On the **right to free movement**, official statistics may provide some indication of the extent to which different nationalities have exercised their right to move from one EU Member State to another. However, it will be difficult to determine from statistics alone what (if anything) was done in the originating LRA area to encourage this right to be exercised because the number of outward migrants is unlikely to be monitored; from the point of view of the destination LRA, the number of non-nationals living and working in the area should, however, be known and will be an indication of the extent to which people have exercised their right to free movement.

It may be necessary to go beyond the official statistics and undertake surveys of people who have moved into the area to identify the factors, including the role of LRAs and the effectiveness of measures that have been introduced to welcome and facilitate newcomers' lives. In the baseline assessment, various **benchmarks** should be calculated such as the proportion of non-nationals voting in EP and municipal elections compared with the voting population as a whole in the area.

In addition to quantitative benchmarks, there should be broader qualitative comparisons between the situation of the LRA area with regard to the various citizens' rights and other areas. Clearly, these and other benchmarks depend on the necessary data being available and this is likely to vary from one LRA to another.

4.3. Step 2 - Development of Strategy

Having undertaken the baseline assessment, the next step is to define the LRA's strategy to increase the awareness and the take up of EU citizens' rights. The strategy should set out:

- **Baseline situation** – summarising the current situation with regard to the take-up of EU citizens' rights in the LRA area (see Step 1 above);
- **Targets** – what the LRA hopes to achieve over a given period of time in relation to the various EU citizens' rights;
- **Key measures** that will be implemented to promote EU citizenship in the locality or region;

- **Implementation framework** – how the measures will be implemented, funding, key partners the LRA will work with, timeframes for achievement of targets, etc.

The baseline assessment should provide a basis for **setting targets** by comparing the current situation with various benchmarks. For example, if the baseline assessment establishes that 45% of those eligible to vote in the LRA area are doing so in EP elections whereas the turnout in a neighbouring region is 65%, then a target could be set of achieving a similar result at the next elections. To take another example, a region’s universities might set targets for the proportion of foreign students they would like to attract from other EU Member States; or there could be a target to achieve a certain level of awareness (as measured in surveys) amongst local people of EU citizens’ rights generally. To the extent possible, targets should be specific, attainable, measurable, relevant and timely (‘SMART’).

A key part of the LRA strategy should set out the **measures to promote EU citizens’ rights** in the area. A distinction should be made between:

- **Target groups** - some interventions might be aimed at general awareness raising while others could be aimed at specific target groups;
- **Measures that focus on different EU citizens’ rights** – voting in elections, mobility of labour, right to petition the European Parliament or to consult the EU Ombudsman. Some measures might combine the different elements, and different methods (awareness-raising, exchanges, etc.);
- **Level at which measures are designed and implemented** - measures that are promoted at an EU or national level but implemented locally as opposed to measures of a purely local nature that are introduced at the initiative of the LRA and perhaps its local partners (top-down approach).; but also measures which are initiated on the local level but supported by the regional, national and EU level (bottom up approach).

Clearly, the types of measures to be implemented will depend on the situation in the LRA area and the availability of funding. Some examples of the different types of measures identified through our research are shown below:

Examples of Measures to Promote EU Citizens’ rights

- **Cultural exchange** - Groups of disadvantaged young people and individuals aged 13–19, encouraged to become more involved in local and national youth projects and in European citizenship. The project aimed to give disadvantaged young people in Tynedale the opportunity to widen their horizons by cultural exchanges of young people to Italy, Poland and Sweden; Hexham Youth Initiative (Hexham Council, UK) (Case study 26)
- **Twinning exchanges** - professional study visits in which representatives exchanged experiences with their counterparts in Stuttgart in areas such as waste management, planning, and community safety; Cardiff City Council in Wales;(Case study 24, UK).
- **Networking platforms** - cities participating in the project benefit from a specially trained business coordinator who planned their strategic economic development focusing on the different strengths. The cities themselves have to network with each other to avoid competition and to exploit synergy opportunities. ‘Cities on the rise’ project - North Austrian and South Bohemian Regions (Case study 29).

The factors to be taken into account with regard to implementation are set out below under Step 3 of the strategy.

4.4. Step 3 - Implementation Framework

There are a number of actions involved in implementing a LRA strategy to promote EU citizenship:

- **Action planning** – the LRA will have to convert the overall strategy into a number of specific actions, each with its own targets, budgets (if appropriate) and timeframes;
- **Preparation of materials** – some measures (e.g. an awareness-raising campaign) may involve the dissemination of information (e.g. example leaflets and brochures) and these will need to be prepared;
- **Partnership working** – is likely to be a key to successful implementation. Some measures to promote EU citizens' rights are likely to involve different levels of governance ('vertical' partnerships) whilst others involve different types of partners within the LRA area ('horizontal' partnerships). A combination of these dimensions is also of course possible, in fact desirable.

Using the strategy as an overall framework, the LRA should produce an **action plan** for each measure (if the strategy consists of a number of measures). This should be a practical document, perhaps set out in the form of a matrix on 1-2 pages, that summarises for each measure what needs to be done, by whom and over what timescale, the desired outcomes/targets, budgets, etc. The action plan is likely to include the **preparation of materials** as one of the early actions although this may not be the case with some types of interventions.

With many measures to promote EU citizenship, the **key partners** for a LRA are likely to be found along a 'vertical' axis as defined above. For example, in the run-up to EP elections, there could be an EU-wide awareness raising campaign which is implemented by EU27 national authorities but with LRAs very much in the lead with regard to certain aspects such as organising events the local dissemination of information. However, even with measures of this sort, working 'horizontally' with local partners (e.g. with other local authorities and NGOs within a region) is likely to be important to success. Other measures may be intrinsically more 'horizontal'. For example, a LRA may implement measures that it introduces itself to encourage mobility in conjunction with local universities and private sector organisations in a region. Some examples from our research are provided below:

Examples of Partnership Working

- **LRAs and NGOs:** The project Empowering European Citizens (Centrum för Publikt Entreprenörskap; NGO, Sweden) aimed to contribute to social change within communities and sustainable development by establishing an enduring international network of leaders. (Case Study 31)
- **LRAs and Associations:** E-panels: fostering citizens' participation and volunteering in a wider Europe (The Association of Local Democracy Agencies) provide Citizens' panel's methodology among LRAs. The projects ALDA implements usually gather LRAs and civil society organisations from several eligible countries, members of the EU and candidate countries. (Case Study 22)
- **LRAs and Agencies:** The Cross-Border Office for Youth Emancipation - (Extremadura, Spain) was started up by the Youth Institute (INJUVE), Portuguese Youth Institute (IPJ) and the Junta of Extremadura through the Regional Ministry of Youth and Sport. The office provides an integral service both physically and virtually (through its website) where the user can obtain all the information and tools necessary to take the step towards mobility. (Case Study 23)
- **LRAs and Charities:** The local Town Council helped fund the core costs of the Work Away Programme Youth Work Practitioners from the Hexham project have also been involved in exchanges to France and Italy through the Grundtvig programme. (Case Study 26)

4.5. Step 4 - Monitoring and Evaluation

The last component of a LRA strategy to promote EU citizenship should involve on-going monitoring of the implementation of measure(s) to ensure that they are likely to achieve their targets. This is clearly not likely to be necessary if the measure has a relatively short duration and is one-off rather than involving a series of interventions.

Ideally, an evaluation should be carried out once the measure has been implemented to establish the extent to which it was successful in achieving its objectives. If the intervention has a relatively long implementation period, or consists of a series of interventions, then it could be that an interim evaluation exercise is justified to help determine whether corrective action is needed if the measure is under-performing against its targets.

5. Conclusions & Recommendations

5.1. Overall Conclusions

LRA shave a key role in promoting EU citizenship and citizens’ rights because they operate at a level of governance that is closest to the target groups. However, there is a lack of information on what LRAs are doing to promote the various rights. This is evident from the research for this study: thus, the survey responses for this study from LRAs were not sufficiently numerous to provide information on the full range of activities that are undertaken to promote EU citizenship and citizens’ rights. This could be explained either by the lack of such measures in place in some of the Member States (as confirmed by the research). It could also be due to the LRAs staff’s turnover which makes it difficult to obtain information on existing measures.

Recommendations	
<u>LRAs</u>	<u>Committee of the Regions/Commission</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Strengthen efforts to implement projects promoting EU citizenship and rights by enhancing cooperation and networking with other LRAs. ✓ Monitor more closely the activities with regard to the promotion of EU citizenship and EU citizens’ rights. Such information should be easily accessible on LRA websites, including data on impacts and the scope for replication of projects implemented. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ To call on its members to ensure that information on LRAs activities and the outcomes of successful projects is publicly available. ✓ To provide a (preferably electronic) platform on which LRAs can provide information on best practices with regards to promotion of EU citizenship and citizens’ rights. Such a platform could improve sharing and replicating the best projects among other LRAs.

Overall, the research shows that there is only a moderate level of awareness of EU citizens’ rights. One of the findings from the research is that awareness of EU citizens’ rights is generally higher among foreign citizens who live in local areas in other Member States, compared with lower levels of awareness among EU citizens who are natives of these areas.

The Citizenship Report 2010 and the accompanying reports on progress towards EU citizenship, and the evaluation of the 2009 European Parliament elections, showed there are still a number of obstacles to fully exercising EU citizens’ rights.

A key problem is a lack of easily accessible information for citizens, as well as low awareness of citizens themselves of EU citizenship and citizens’ rights. While overcoming some of these obstacles depends on the correct transposition into national legislation of EU law, or on new legislative action, there is also scope for LRAs to do more to foster awareness of rights connected to EU citizenship.

Recommendations	
<u>LRAs</u>	<u>Committee of the Regions/Commission</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Member States and their LRAs should fully transpose EU directives into national law. ✓ By monitoring developments and sufficiently implementing EU legislation regarding EU citizenship and EU citizens' rights, LRAs should also foster awareness of EU citizens' rights and be able to provide effective assistance and information to nationals and other EU citizens. ✓ To cut red tape (i.e. reduce costs and administrative burdens) in order to ensure efficient implementation of European citizens' rights. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ To closely monitor the progress of implementation of the EU legislative framework regarding the full scope of EU citizens' rights as well as EU citizenship; ✓ To prepare evaluation reports on the developments in implementation of such laws in all EU Member States but also accessing countries.

5.2. Right to free movement and residence

As concluded in the previous sections, compared with other EU citizens' rights, there appears to be a relatively high level of awareness of the right to free movement and residence. The CSES survey results showed that LRAs have rather mixed views in relation to the awareness among citizens of their own country about the right to free movement and residence as opposed to citizens living in the area from other EU Member States with no clear patterns.

Although the views of LRAs with regard to awareness of the right to free movement and residence vary, the majority of LRAs recognise the need to foster awareness of the right to free movement among citizens. The highest number of good practice examples concern the right to free movement and residence. The fact that a lot is being done in this area probably reflects the fact that the right of free movement, and measures to promote it (e.g. in the employment, health, education field, etc.), closely affects the everyday lives of citizens – more so than the right to periodically vote in EP elections.

As mentioned in the previous sections, the right to free movement and residence is promoted by LRAs through several types of schemes. This includes educational measures and other interventions such as awareness-raising events as well as cross-border schemes and town twinning projects. These schemes usually have very specific target groups – young people (students and/or workers), disadvantaged citizens, economic migrants, cross-border workers, other EU nationals and LRAs staff.

Town twinning schemes seem to be particularly successful as the participating parties obtain more focused and concrete contacts and experiences provided by the town twinning partner. Cross-border schemes are similar in nature with a focus on providing advice and practical support.

Implementation of such measures helps to foster new economic initiatives within regions. Through a wider combination of local/regional institutions and companies networking

together, regional economic strategies can be improved, which can result in an increase in the number of jobs created. This encourages cross-border mobility among workers in the region.

As shown in the case studies, NGOs also play an important role in promoting the right to free movement and residence. This is particularly so because of their role in implementing EU legislation in the areas of labour law, health and safety at work, gender equality and non-discrimination. The case studies highlight many good examples of initiatives to promote the right to free movement and residence; however there is still scope to improve the effectiveness of measures.

As the case studies show, some of the schemes are co-financed by the EU and organised within the scope the Europe for Citizens’ programme, EUREG or/and INTERREG. These programmes provide a good opportunity for LRAs to promote their regions and cultures on a larger scale. There is still a scope for improvement with regard to the uptake of these types of programmes by the LRAs.

Recommendations	
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>LRAs</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ To take full advantage of available programmes (i.e. Europe for Citizens) funding to increase awareness and citizens' understanding of the right to free movement and residence and other EU citizens' rights. ✓ There should be a high level of networking among cities/regions in order to increase the development of synergies to strengthen local and regional businesses. LRAs should increase participation in cross-border and twinning projects as they help to foster new economic initiatives within regions and exchange of experiences. ✓ To continue having a direct approach to the concerns and aspirations of the citizens and to implement innovative and appropriate solutions. 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Committee of the Regions/Commission</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ To more effectively promote programmes like the Europe for Citizens among LRAs and to encourage LRAs to use the full potential of available funding to promote the right to free movement and residence. ✓ To make sure that application procedures are not too complex and time-consuming, particularly with regard to the planned complementarity between the programmes themselves and the possibility of using resources allocated to different programmes. ✓ To encourage LRAs during workshops and conferences to network and actively take part in cross-border and twinning projects. Possibly provide a platform for networking or organise twinning meetings among cities and regions. ✓ To encourage LRAs to recognise and survey groups which are still facing obstacles connected to the right to free movement and residence.

5.3. Electoral rights

As highlighted in previous sections, EU citizens still face a number of obstacles with regard to electoral rights which are often connected to factors such as a lack of awareness of procedures, registration difficulties and language. However, there is evidence that legal conditions allowing EU citizens to exercise their right to vote and to stand as a candidate in their Member State of residence are fulfilled and LRAs in some countries have implemented measures to increase participation. However, major obstacles remain in some Member States to the exercising of electoral rights for EU citizens.

According to almost half of the surveyed LRAs, the main obstacle to making electoral rights effective is the lack of interest among European citizens in exercising their EU citizens’ rights while living in a Member State other than their own. Other obstacles include problems with learning local customs and languages. However, as shown in the case studies, some of the LRAs have implemented innovative initiatives to address these issues and to foster awareness of the electoral rights. It can be noted that some of the measures concerning electoral rights are mainly implemented just before elections, which leaves long periods of time when insufficient efforts are made to promote awareness of EU electoral rights.

LRAs promote the electoral rights through a range of interventions including educational initiatives and information campaigns. The EU-focused educational and interactive events for pupils promote EU electoral rights by engaging pupils and their parents in events, as well as create a high level of awareness of voting rights in relation to the European Parliament and local elections. These measures are particularly successful in promoting electoral rights as they attract considerable interest from media organisations, schools, pupils, parents and NGOs. Furthermore, expenditure on these types of projects is generally quite modest as they are usually included in the school’s curriculum. It can be concluded that such measures are effective due to their strong understanding of a particular target group and its requirements.

Wider information campaigns and information-related events are also crucial to the promotion of electoral rights. The most effective measures through which LRAs can successfully inform local and regional citizens about their electoral rights are those which engage citizens in an active dialogue with LRAs (i.e. through conferences, workshops and brainstorming meetings). As the case study examples show, information campaigns usually aim at much bigger target groups than more focused interventions such as events in schools. Such measures could have a potentially big impact in increasing the number of registered voters in local and European elections. However a more targeted approach is advised, as large scale projects often do not address the concerns of particular groups, e.g. other EU nationals residing in a city or region.

Recommendations	
<u>LRAs</u>	<u>Committee of the Regions/Commission</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ To encourage local and regional schools and NGOs to play an active role in promoting EU citizenship and EU citizens’ rights, and to develop cooperation with local partners and to make a full use of the Commission’s Contact Points and other representations of the EU Institutions in Member States. ✓ To actively promote electoral rights throughout the year (not only before local, regional and EU elections); and to actively promote electoral rights throughout the year (not only before local and EU elections) to provide targeted, engaging dialogue with citizens; and to engage in a dialogue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ To encourage LRAs to engage local and regional schools and NGOs in promoting electoral rights; but also to provide information (leaflets, bulletins) on the representations of the EU Institution on the ground that can help in promoting electoral rights. ✓ To provide LRAs with best practice examples, showing the outcomes of a more targeted approach and to put particular emphasis on the need to promote these rights throughout the year, especially with regards to other EU nationals.

<p>not only nationals but also other EU nationals to address their concerns regarding electoral provisions in the Member State.</p>	
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5.4. Right to complain to the Ombudsman and to Petition the EP

As presented in previous section, there is a particularly low awareness among citizens of their right to complain to the Ombudsman and to Petition the EP. It also seems that LRAs’ knowledge of this particular right is insufficient. As with the other EU citizens’ rights, lack of awareness and lack of interest are seen by LRAs as the main obstacles to allowing European citizens to use the Ombudsman’s services and to petition the European Parliament. However, a limited number of complaints have been brought before the Ombudsman. This could be perceived as a positive outcome of activities taken by the European and Regional Ombudsman, as fewer citizens complain.

The case study research suggests that there is an insufficient number of measures to promote the right to complain to the Ombudsman and to Petition the EP (only three measures were identified). The case studies suggest that one of the ways to promote awareness about the right to complain to the European Ombudsman and the regional Ombudsman is to organise conferences and workshops with the representatives of the European Ombudsman’s office at a local level. As a result of such conferences and workshops, the number of complaints has been reduced. However, as shown by the survey results (Section 3.1), there is still very little awareness of the Ombudsman’s role among European citizens, but also among LRAs and measures to promote the right to complain to the Ombudsman are not sufficient to make a difference in this respect.

These types of projects have been organised by various LRAs and provide local communities with the opportunity to learn about the Ombudsman’s role. Events such as these also provided a platform to inform the public about the role and limitations of the Ombudsman (e.g. that the European Ombudsman can only deal with complaints concerning the EU administration and not with complaints about national, regional, or local administrations, even when the complaints concern EU matters).

The number of petitions submitted to the EP has remained more or less the same over the years which could also indicate a lack of awareness among EU citizens about their rights. As the case study research showed, there are an insufficient number of measures to promote the right to Petition the European Parliament.

Recommendation
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Committee of the Regions, Commission, EU Ombudsman, EP Committee for Petition</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Should combine efforts to promote the right to complain to the Ombudsman and to petition the EP firstly among LRAs and their representative. ✓ Should prepare information campaigns, bulletins, leaflets, which should firstly target LRAs staff.

Strategic Framework for Promotion of EU Citizenship and Citizens' Rights

The benefits of a strategic framework of the type outlined in the previous section lie in enhancing the coherence of measures, facilitating prioritisation and an appropriate allocation of human and financial resources, and ensuring that LRAs and partner organisations work efficiently together with a strong set of shared objectives.

For example, a strategic framework could provide LRAs with a stronger understanding of the baseline situation with regard to EU citizens' rights across different regions. The implementation of a common strategic framework would allow LRAs to focus on action planning tasks and free up resources that could be used to improve project level activities. These and other factors should help ensure that interventions achieve greater impacts than is likely if projects are pursued on an individual and unconnected basis.

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