

## THIRD PARTY PROJECT OVERVIEW – IMPACT4VALUES

### CALL 2 – ACTIONS FOR DEFENDING EU VALUES

#### 1. CROATIAN YOUTH NETWORK, „The fight for the right to participation and representation”

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<b>Funding awarded</b>	9.990,00 EUR
<b>Project duration</b>	6 months (09.01.2024 – 08.07.2024)

This project is focused on fair political participation of young people, responding to recent amendments to the Youth Councils Act. Through activities such as strategic meetings and digital dialogues, we aim to ensure transparency, democratic values, and justice in processes affecting young people in the Republic of Croatia. The project started implementation on January 9 and will last for 6 months, until July 8, 2024.

#### Main Project Goals:

**FAIR POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE:** We advocate for a democratic approach to the political participation of young people, contrary to the recently adopted amendments to the Youth Councils Act. We want to ensure that young people have equal access to political processes and that their voices are heard.

**TRANSPARENCY AND DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES:** We demand transparency in decision-making processes affecting young people. Our goal is to ensure that political processes are democratic, respecting fundamental human rights, freedom of choice, and association.

**RAISING AWARENESS AND EDUCATION:** The project's activities are focused on raising awareness of the issues related to the new legal provisions among citizens, youth organizations, and political stakeholders. Educating young people about democratic processes and encouraging their active participation are also key objectives.

**FORMING ALLIANCES:** Through collaboration with partner organizations, strategic meetings with key stakeholders, and engagement with parliamentary clubs, we are building an alliance network that supports our initiative for change.

**INCREASING YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION:** Our aim is to encourage young people to actively participate in political processes, including engaging in local youth councils and other initiatives. We want to stimulate political awareness among young people and encourage parties to include youth issues in their programs.

**MEDIA COVERAGE AND PUBLIC DIALOGUE:** Through media activities, we want to inform the public about the importance of our fight. Public dialogue, media appearances, and articles contribute to raising awareness and fostering discussion about youth participation.

#### **Expected Project Results:**

- Achieving broader social awareness of the issues in the new legal provisions related to youth councils. We expect that our efforts in raising awareness will result in a better understanding among citizens of the importance of democratic principles, transparency, and fair political participation of young people.
- Increasing youth participation in political processes, especially in local youth councils and other political initiatives. We want to encourage young people to actively engage in political life and recognize the importance of their contribution to society.
- Forming strong alliances with civil society organizations, political parties, and parliamentary clubs in the Croatian Parliament. We expect these partnerships to support our initiative and enable joint action in achieving our goals.
- Achieving significant media presence through articles, appearances on shows, and statements in central news programs. We anticipate that media outreach will result in broader public support and stimulate public dialogue about youth participation in political processes.

#### **Achieved results:**

During the project implementation period from January 9th 2024 until July 8th 2024, **Result 1 - Mobilization and raised awareness of decision-makers and young people from local communities** was achieved. 12 national, regional and local strategic meetings were held with key stakeholders, including local decision makers (representatives of cities and counties), Youth Councils (Zagreb, Rijeka, Kastav, Opatija, Osijek, Osijecko-baranjska county, Split, Splitsko-dalmatinska county), Associations (House of Human Rights, Center for Peace Studies), as well as nationally relevant stakeholders such as the Agency for Mobility and EU Programs, the Association of Cities, the Ombudsman, the UNICEF Office for Croatia. Of particular note is the meeting in the Office of the President of the Republic of Croatia, the issue was presented to President Zoran Milanović, as well to his advisors for civil society.

The goal of the meetings was to familiarize decision-makers with the issue as well as to map the area of joint cooperation and action, in order to ensure that the topic remains in the focus of the actors and outside the advocacy action itself. For example, after meetings with the institution of the Ombudsman, she added this very issue to the chapter on Youth in her annual report. After meetings with the Agency for Mobility and EU Programs to strengthen youth participation and civic awareness, the joint implementation of informal studies on young people began to be agreed upon in order to strengthen and capacitate young people for further action and development of the local community.

Partner organizations also held meetings at the local and regional (county) level that further informed decision-makers, members of the Youth Council and other stakeholders about this issue. As a result of these strategic meetings, contact between county councils and civil society organizations was made for the first time in Osijek, and in Rijeka, it was agreed that at the National Conference of the Youth

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Council, which will be held in October 2024 in Rijeka, they will also talk about these controversial changes and additions. [Recommendations for improving the work and efficiency of city and county youth councils in Croatia](#) have also been prepared, which Beneficiary will present at meeting with the newly established Ministry of Education, Science and Youth, with whom contact has been made, and a meeting will follow in September and will be presented at to all CYN activities in which we discuss with the members the current affairs of the Law on Youth Councils.

4 Local Action Forums were held in regional centers - Zagreb, Osijek, Rijeka and Split. The forums provided a space for presenting the conclusions of strategic meetings and advocacy activities. In addition to the presentation of previous efforts, during these activities Beneficiary has worked directly with relevant stakeholders (Council members, officers who work with councils, representatives of institutions, associations, youth) to create conclusions and recommendations for improvement and new amendments to the Act on Youth Councils.

**Result 2 - Strengthened advocacy role of MMH and advocacy potential of CYN** members was partially realized. 3 online digital dialogues were held to encourage members of the CYN to actively participate in spreading support and strengthening advocacy potential. The members were informed about the campaign and were encouraged to organize additional activities, but the planned 3 mini-activities were ultimately not implemented. Other actors (representatives of political parties, young people) participated in the digital dialogues and wanted to hear more about the campaign and advocacy efforts, as well as the issue of new amendments to the Act on Youth Councils. This type of cooperation contributed to the dissemination of information and news about our advocacy efforts as an organization, but also to the improvement of policies for young people in the Republic of Croatia, because all these organizations work with young people on education and capacity building.

Beneficiary has created an advocacy and communication plan and, as part of that, conducted a media campaign, 4 meetings were held with members of Parliament. 44 MPs provided support for submitting requests for constitutionality assessment, and 22 of them won mandates again in the new convocation of the Parliament. Cooperation with the representatives continues and they participated in events and workshops of the Beneficiary and have openly communicated their willingness to continue to be available for any future initiatives or needs. Cooperation is manifested through the continuous exchange of information, participation in work meetings and active participation in projects, which ensures the continuation of constructive dialogue and support for key issues of young people within the framework of the Beneficiary's advocacy activities.

The Beneficiary has submitted the Request for constitutionality assessment, and the process itself strengthened democratic principles and transparency because all the democratic tools of checking and supervision of the Authority, the decision-maker, were used in the adoption of normative acts. The request for constitutionality assessment is open and in the procedural phase. The Beneficiary regularly monitors the status of the request through official channels and through unofficial sources that have access to certain information. Next steps include continued monitoring through all available sources, maintaining contact with relevant stakeholders, and readiness for further advocacy activities as the situation develops.