

## Youth Exchange – ‘DemocrActive’

Athens (8th-15th of May 2017)

### Participants’ experiences leaflet

‘DemocrActive’ was a youth exchange program under the Erasmus+ KA1. The main aim of this project was to increase youth participation in the democratic life of the European Union. The exchange took place over 8 days in Athens, Greece. The participants will come from Greece, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Spain and Turkey.

The topics of the project aimed to

- ✓ inform the young people about the European Union and decision-making processes,
- ✓ enhance the European identity
- ✓ create closer links between young people and the EU,
- ✓ to promote the concept of active European citizenship
- ✓ promote democratic principles and values
- ✓ increase the mutual understanding between young people from across Europe, with different cultures and backgrounds and
- ✓ boost participants’ personal development.

The topics of the project were explored through a range of non-formal learning methods, focused on participatory, peer and experiential learning and creative expression of young people. The activities of the project are creative and diverse, from quizzes to role playing, open discussions and so on. The programme implementation was partly in hands of the participants themselves as



well as professional facilitators providing input and guidance through the method of experiential learning.

50 young people from 10 different countries were gathered in Athens for 8 days to discuss about EU and Democracy. After these days they share their experiences.

*“DemocrActive project was a great experience because allowed us to contact with other people from other countries and cultures, to know a new country, to discuss important subjects for our society and to know better the EU. I advise young people to participate in this kind of projects as in that way we can build a better Europe”*

**Patricia, Portugal**

*“During the sessions I learnt different ways to be an active citizen. Most importantly, I learnt how to deal with problems. We tried to negotiate between countries about external and internal problems.*

**Damla, Turkey**

*“For me the most important thing I’ve experienced here so far was the “cityland”. I enjoyed the time and I realized how difficult is to cooperate and negotiate with various types of people.”*

**Martina, Czech Republic**

*“This is my first project and so far I really like being here. I’ve met really nice people not only from Greece but all over Europe. I especially like the group activities because during them I get to know other participants better”*

**Karin, Slovakia**



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*“I learnt more about European Union and how difficult is to make politics. I also learnt to respect all opinions and I discovered that no one has the right/wrong opinion, just a different one. I also understood how is a European citizen and the profit of staying together.”*

*Celso, Portugal*

*“I met many new people and established friendships with them. I also learnt many things about democracy, EU and the role of the youngsters in decision making.*

*Valentin, Bulgaria*

*“I’m really happy to be here in this project. Knowing people from other countries or cultures is a positive experience. This learning is going to be very important in my personal future. Coexistence and mutual learning is necessary to create a new society and well-being states for our Europe.”*

*Emilio, Spain*

*“During those days I’ve improved my knowledge on EU institutions and on the forms in which Democracy is nowadays spread in EU countries. I’ve liked the activity based on the EU institutions because it’s important to inform young people about the role each institution plays in EU in order to understand how decisions are taken.”*

*Martina, Italy*

*“This project gave me the chance to know people from different countries as well as the chance to know more about our society and politics. The main things I got are the values of democracy that we all should have in our lives: tolerance, respect, acceptance, no judgment. If all of us apply those on a daily basis, the world will become a better place.”*

*Beatriz, Portugal*

*“I really enjoyed the group workshops that gave us time to know better all the members of the project, changing always the work groups. I really loved the intercultural nights that gave us the chance to discover other cultures but also to have fun in a more informal way”*

**Mario, Italy**

*“This is my first project. I really like the idea of this project. Talking about democracy and doing activities which are connected with the topic is the best way to inform young people about the theme and convince them to be an active citizen in their countries. Young people can share the ideas they’ve learnt during this project and spread it worldwide.”*

**Magda, Poland**

*“I love to talk with people from different cultures and hear their opinions and be able to share mine. At this project I met a lot of awesome people. The topic of democracy and the EU is very important and everyone should learn how to debate with the others”.*

**Jolana, Czech Republic**

*“I will bring home more consciousness about EU and Democracy. Hope to share it with my friends who are interested for the future of EU”*

**Katarzyna, Poland**

*“We learnt many things about EU, Democracy and active citizenship. I can say that I am able to express what I know about EU and its institutions, what values are needed for democracy and what we should do to be an active citizen. It was such a great experience for me to share this opportunity with Europeans in the birth place of Democracy, Greece”*

**Ismail, Turkey**

*“I have met a lot of interesting people. I love Greece and I have learnt a lot of things about democracy that I didn’t know before”*

***Tudor, Romania***

*“This project actually offers a lovely intercultural situation in which to have fun and dramatically increase relational, linguistic and performative aspects.*

***Francesco, Italy***

*“I’ve learnt many new things but also I’ve got a chance to practice knowledge I’d had before. I feel lucky to be among people who really care about our world, politics and want to make a positive change”*

***Beatriz, Czech Republic***

*“My experience in this project is wonderful and useful of course. My English level improves day by day and I can understand the perspectives from persons who come from other countries and their cultures. I also have learnt about democracy and the EU”*

***Isabel, Spain***

*“This experience has been very interesting but also very tiring. I really like The Sea and the sun and I have learnt a lot of things about Democracy”*

***Anca, Romania***

*“We’ve learnt a lot of things, including EU policy, institutions and forms of democracy. It was a great experience. We all had a lot of fun, we learnt in a funny way and we were not bored. We enjoyed the area, the games, the energizers, the sessions and we met a lot of friends”*

***Vera, Greece***