

The project « **CONNECT EUROPE** » was funded with the support of the European Union under the Programme "Europe for Citizens"

**Applicable to the Strand 2 – Measure 2.1 "Town-Twinning"**

**Participation:** The project involved ... citizens, notably ... participants from the city of ... (**country**), ... participants from the city of ... (**country**) etc.

**Location/ Dates:** The event took place in ... (**city, country**), from dd/mm/yyyy to dd/mm/yyyy

**Short description:**

The day of dd/mm/yyyy was dedicated to ...

The day of dd/mm/yyyy was dedicated to ... etc.

**Applicable to the Strand 2 – Measure 2.2 *"Networks of Towns"***

**Measure 2.3 *"Civil Society Projects"***

**Strand 1 – *"European Remembrance"***

**17 events have been carried out within this project:**

### **Event 1**

**Participation:** The event involved 10 citizens, including 3 participants from Denmark, 1 participant from Finland, 2 participants from Germany, 1 participant from the Netherlands, 1 participant from Poland, 1 participant from Portugal and 1 participant from France.

**Location / Dates:** The event took place in Copenhagen, Denmark, from 20/02/2019 to 21/02/2019

**Short description:** The aim of the event was to prepare the project partner in the project objective. In order to strengthen the overall purpose, all partners met to agree on the details of the project. We shared furthermore findings and experiences in order to learn from each other. Every partner prepared and shared a presentation on its field of expertise.

### **Event 2**

**Participation:** The event involved 150 citizens, including 150 participants from Denmark

**Location / Dates:** The event took place in Humlebæk, Denmark, from 19/03/2019 to 19/03/2019

**Short description:** The aim of the event was to discuss the future of Europe between youth citizens. Short months before the European parliament election we discussed fundamental values of the European Union between the youth and Danish Members of the European Parliament. We emphasize on creating a safe informal setting for the discussions, reaching those who find more formal settings intimidating, elitist or out of reach for the everyday EU citizens. The purpose with this dialogue was to listen to the citizens' concerns and to address their visions for the future of Europe in a constructive matter.

### **Event 3**

**Participation:** The event involved 20 citizens, including 20 participants from Germany.

**Location / Dates:** The event took place Germany from 11/05/2019 to 20/06/2019

**Short description:** The aim of the event was to have citizens-to-citizens talks in Germany around the European election. These talks were part of a European public sphere project where the discussion was centered around the future of Europe and the participation in the election.

### **Event 4**

**Participation:** The event involved 46 citizens, all from Portugal

**Location / Dates:** The event took place in Lisbon, Portugal, from 17/05/2019-17/05/2019

**Short description:** The aim of the event was to discuss the future of Europe from a feminist point of view. The dialogue was citizens-to-citizens oriented. This forum brought about a constructive discussion on common solutions to challenges and an understanding of Euroscepticism. The discussion had a European perspective and brought a feeling of a transnational democracy.

### **Event 5**

**Participation:** The event involved 100 citizens, including participants from the 93 Amsterdam Netherlands, 2 Denmark, 1 Germany, 1 France, 1 Finland, 1 Portugal, 1 Poland.

**Location / Dates:** The event took place in Amsterdam, Holland, from 18/06/2019 to 19/06/2019

**Short description:** The aim of the event was to discuss the charter on freedom in relation to digital rights as a human right.

In the midst of June and as a part of the Connect Europe project the partnership behind met in the adventurous city of Amsterdam, Netherland.

Here the Dutch partners, Netwerk Democratie, had invited us to join WeMakeThe.City at the conference, Cities for Digital Rights, that lit a light over how digitalization of the public service and spheres affect our citizens rights. As part of the project the conference had a specific focus based on the chapters of EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and on this day, we would explore the theme of chapter II (Freedom) in connection with the concerns and visions of the citizens.

In three sessions we explored the right to freedom from the European charter of fundamental rights and discussed the requirements for freedom to flourish in our current societies. The day consisted of 3 program sessions:

- Free city, free citizens
- How to involve citizens in safeguarding freedom in the digital society
- How to empower good practice?

This issue is highly relevant for the civil society to engage in as the digital is just another platform for us to fight for human rights in. So much of modern city development is about finding and creating smart technological solutions to the challenges facing access to public service, infrastructure, security and information. But with modern solutions comes modern problems.

Obviously, as digital rights activist from Toronto, Bianca Wylie put it, “we must be aware of the dilemmas between the need for effective digital solutions as well as the right of privacy.” But beyond the question of security we face the issue of access.

At first we easily run the risk of a digital divide between those who has the necessary technology like smartphones and computers as well as the knowhow to access the services – and those who run the risk of being left behind modern welfare solution due to technical inadequacy when the digital development takes off. As deputy mayor in Milan, Roberta Cocco pointed out, we run the risk of providing worse service as for example citizens access to personal information, certificates etc. if they do not have the technical knowhow to access this.

We must therefore constantly be aware of the privilege that lies within the solutions we offer in the digital world doesn't mimic the inequalities we experience in the analog. And as Sennay Ghebream, a Neuroinformatic, puts it, “the digital easily becomes a space for already existing inequalities.” Therefore, we must assure that the rights of free speech, gathering and organizing is translated unto the digital sphere. Because digital rights are human rights.

## **Event 6**

**Participation:** The event involved 53 citizens, including 43 participants from Portugal, 3 from Denmark, 1 from Finland, 1 from Norway, 1 from USA, 1 from the Netherlands, 1 from Italy and 2 from France.

**Location / Dates:** The event took place in Lissabon, Portugal from 19/09/2019 to 20/09/2019

**Short description:** The aim of the event was to discuss the charter of equality, in the charter of fundamental rights.

From the 19-20th of September we were gathered as part of the Connect Europe project in Lisbon, Portugal at the invitation of our portuguese partners, Plataforma portuguesa para os direitos das mulheres – or Portuguese platform for women as they are called in english. A social, cultural and humanist non-governmental organization, independent from political parties, religious institutions or governmental structures, whose members are women's rights NGOs.

After working for women's rights since 2004 they were perfect to host the events centering around Chapter 3 in the European charter for fundamental rights; Equality. For two days we explored and debated the fundamental rights with experts, members of the national- and European Parliament and at public events with citizens and women's rights activist. In the end we learned that not only is the chapter still relevant today, when it comes to women's rights it seems that the EU is fundamentally important to prevent national states from going backwards when it comes to protection of the fundamental rights.

### **The role of civil society in the creation of the Charter**

On September 19th Connect Europe visited the Portuguese Parliament. Here, the member of Parliament and former vice-president of the convention for the EU charter of Fundamental rights, Pedro Bacelar de Vasconcelos, greeted us for the meeting on the importance of the charter today with a special message; the important role of civil society organizations when it comes to maintaining the rights in the charter at the political system today. “So many of us don't know what the charter contains and the possibility the Charter opens to each citizen.” He says, then goes on to explain the role of the civil society in the creation of the charter where he himself played a great part in its development.

20 years after it's creation it remains one of the most ambition civil rights paper, an innovative initiative that received a lot of critics and oppositions in the beginning for clashing with constitutions in the different membership countries. One of the reasons for the eventual success of creating and acceptance of the charter was the involvement of the civil society. As it was created and debated the working group where Pedro was part, they received thousands of inputs, criticism, and propositions from civil society all over Europe. Inputs that was essential for getting the charter approved in the end.

Today the charter remains ever important – but it is not without its problems. The main issue is that it first and foremost is unclear how we are to understand it; as a law or a set of directions? And secondly that people are not used to organize around a charter. But today, he says, we are at a turning point. And perhaps the 20-year anniversary of the charter is the perfect time for civil society to revisit the charter and once more give their inputs

for the preservation of our fundamental rights as Europeans as well as inviting the public to participate and learn more about the Charter.

### **The fiscal crisis and the charter**

For Pedro one of the fundamental rights in the charter is equality between men and women:

Article 23

#### **Equality between men and women**

Equality between men and women must be ensured in all areas, including employment, work and pay. The principle of equality shall not prevent the maintenance or adoption of measures providing for specific advantages in favour of the under-represented sex.

This entail of cause a long range of issues, issues that we explored the next day in the European Parliament Liaison Office in Portugal, Lisbon. Here Maria Manuel Leitão Marques, MEP – Group of Progressive Alliance of Socialist and Democrats and Isabel Romão, expert on women’s rights, debated parity, gender pay gap and gender budgeting, moderated by Euro news journalist Isabel Silva.

As Pedro explained one issue is that the charter was ratified in 2009, the same time as the fiscal crisis swept through Europe and challenged the social structures in the Union. The social rights were not being used by the Commission or politicians to fight the austerity as a response to the crisis which impacted the fundamental rights of the citizens.

As Isabel Romão also pointed to, strict budgeting as the response to the fiscal crisis had a massive negative influence on the equality in the union, not at least equality between men and women. Today the chapter remains as relevant as ever as there continue to be a great division between the genders when it comes to political representation, job opportunity and equal pay for jobs of equal work.

As Pedro Valenta da Silva, Chief of staff at the European Parliament Liaison Office put it “All times are good times to discuss the charter and chapter 3 of Equality.” That day was no exception.

### **The work of Éleine Vogel-Polsky, champion of women’s right in EU**

At the public event at Graça on the eve of the 20th, Platforma Portuguese had arranged for a screening of the documentary of Éleine Vogel-Polsky – the story of the lawyer and feminist who dedicated her life to fight for equality between men and women in the European Union. Here we learned of the story of the inspirational woman and champion of women’s rights and how she used the part in the Lisbon treaty on equal pay to fight in the courts for parity in the workplaces across Europe. By doing this she proved that the European Union can be used to ensure the civil rights of it’s citizens.

As the director, Agnés Hubert, said it is important to tell these stories. To remind us of the struggles, our rights and last but not least that as well as there where founding fathers of the union we also had the founding mothers who shapes the system in their image.

### **Equality today...?**

So in short, we had the opportunity to reflect upon the creation of the Charter, of the history of women’s rights in the union and the state of equality today. Much have been done and much remain to do when it comes to ensure that all member states ensure the rights of Chapter 3. But what does the future hold? As Ana Sofia Fernandes from Platforma Portuguese puts it: “Now that we for the first time see a woman as president we expect parity to be embedded in the work of the Commission.”

We have seen EU legislation being used to fight for parity within the Union but we also know that many issues still remain today and that our rights in fiscal crisis situations are being pressured making it as important as ever that we have strong civil society organizations to insist on these fundamental rights. And so we look ahead for a new revitalization of the Charter and Chapter 3.

## **Event 7**

**Participation:** The event involved 34 citizens, including 6 from Finland, 3 from Denmark, 3 from the Philippines, 1 from Sierra Leone, 1 from Ghana, 1 from Mexico, 2 from Nigeria, 3 from France, 1 from Australia, 1 from Malaysia 1 from Tanzania, 1 from the UK, 1 from Albania, 1 from Kenya, 1 from Cameroon, 1 from India, 1 from Burundi, 1 from Greece, 1 from Portugal, 1 from the Netherlands, 1 from Poland and 1 from the USA.

**Location / Dates:** The event took place Omnia in Finland from 28/10/2019-30/10/2019

**Short description:** The aim of the event was to focus on Dignity in the charter of fundamental rights.

From the 28th till the 30th of November the Connect Europe project gathered in Helsinki's suburb Omnia in Finland to discuss the first chapter in the European Charter of Fundamental rights, Dignity.

**At Omnia campus we organized the debate and had the opportunity to have a citizens-talk with students of care-work on the importance of Dignity and the Charter of Fundamental rights.**

Throughout the debate in the classroom the students formulated a range of recommendations for the European politicians centering around chapter 1 in The European charter of Fundamental rights, Dignity.

The debate mostly centered around article 1 and 2:

#### **Article 1**

Human dignity

Human dignity is inviolable. It must be respected and protected.

#### **Article 3**

Right to the integrity of the person

1. Everyone has the right to respect for his or her physical and mental integrity.

Truly important to the future caretakers of Finland was their ability to ensure the health and dignity of their clients. Something that they saw the state play an crucial role in ensuring. And the charter to ensure that they would pursue. One of the ways, they argued, that more people would be able to be met with dignity in the public service system, was if more people was aware of their rights as they are stated in the charter. Therefor more people should be made aware of its existence.

The students landed on recommendations such as - "There ought to be more discussion about human dignity at schools.", "Everyone needs to have a possibility to get to know their rights in the EU." And "Citizens' discussion is always good and it open up new views to issues of concern."

Education on ones rights in the European Union was truly important for the students in this citizens talk and highlight a key point: people need to know their rights to claim them.

This way the people would be able to pressure the state to ensure that everyone gets the opportunity to ensure their physical and mental integrity in their care.

But more than just concrete recommendations the debate itself also proved to be an eye-opener in the ways we all understand and interpret the concept of dignity; from a question of being able to practice free will till the states responsibility of ensuring a proper welfare, the thoughts was plentiful.

One thing they all agreed on was that in a true democracy, dignity is king.

#### **Beyond growth and dignity**

The project partners were able to participate in an European conference based on the concept Beyond Growth. Here a wide range of interested parties gathered – from decision-makers, administration, academia and finally civil society actors, like the Connect Europe partners. All of us brought together for two day by our wish for a more sustainable Europe and our interest in an economic and political understanding of measuring that goes beyond our classical understanding of growth. Connect Europe focus on creating a deeper understanding of our shared values and rights in Europe and the importance of bottom up policy recommendation witch deeply taps into the elements of the Beyond growth conference themes.

That event was organized by Finnish Development NGOs – Fingo, together with Finland's National Commission on Sustainable Development.

#### **Event 8**

**Participation:** The event involved 16 citizens from Finland.

**Location / Dates:** The event took place in Helsinki, Finland, from 11/11/2019

**Short description:** The aim of the event was to further discuss dignity and played a role in the above-mentioned activities. It was the same event, with more students, however the workshop for these people were scheduled for other time.

## **Event 9**

**Participation:** The event involved 45 citizens, including 30 from Poland, 4 from Denmark, 2 from Sweden, 1 from the Netherlands, 1 from Germany, 1 from Kaliningrad, 1 from Finland, 1 from Portugal and 3 from Italy.

**Location / Dates:** The event took place in Gdansk, Poland, from 02/12/2019-03/12/2019

**Short description:** The aim of the event was to discuss chapter on Solidarity in the Charter fundamental rights

In the very early beginning of December 2019, we travelled to Gdansk, Poland, to visit the partner organization, Euroregion Baltic (ERB). The organization was established in February 1998 and is a political cooperation in the south-east of the Baltic Sea region. These days they would welcome the Connect Europe partners to a conversation centering around the theme of Solidarity.

In a tour of the city we learned of the hardships, battles and historical events that had taken place in this war-torn city – historically, a place for outside forces to claim with little disregard for the existing population. But also, a city that should come to play a profound role in the healing of Europe and fall of the communist regime. The key to this story we found at old shipyard. Today a peaceful sight and build in its place, the European Solidarity Center, a museum, but in earlier days a center of deadly worker struggles, a fight for justice and – in the end – the birthplace of free trade unions in Poland. Sparks may have flown here but as it turned out, the same sparks that sprung from the suffering of suppressed workers lighted the fire of democracy and foresaw the end of communism.

### **Solidarity**

The European charter for fundamental rights has a chapter especially suited to converse about in this historical place, Chapter IV, Solidarity and especially Article 28:

Article 28

Right of collective bargaining and action

Workers and employers, or their respective organisations, have, in accordance with Community law and national laws and practices, the right to negotiate and conclude collective agreements at the appropriate levels and, in cases of conflicts of interest, to take collective action to defend their interests, including strike action.

Solidarity was also the name of the first free trade union in Poland, Solidarność, whose leader, Lech Wałęsa, was later elected for president and awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. But in the beginning it was a social movement that through civil resistance worked to ensure social change and workers rights.

### **A place for solidarity**

European solidarity center today houses the story of the struggles of Solidarność and the Polish struggle for democracy. This special day it also housed us, a school class of youngsters who were to learn about the story as well as debating amongst themselves what the idea of solidarity meant for them.

When asked to reflect upon the meaning of solidarity the students came up with many responses – it's about teamwork, coming together, acceptance. But also, it is about power and action. The power of the many was not lost on the youth who was inspired by the stories of the past.

As Jacek Koltan, deputy director of European Solidarity Center puts it, one of the most important demands today is the need for physical spaces where we can create a sense of community and debate the struggles of today. The issues we face, such as climate changes and social division, are those of great complexity that we need to come together around if we are to find sustainable solutions.

Perhaps that is also what we need today. New spaces to reflect on our shared interest. Together we stand, divided we fall.

## **Event 10**

**Participation:** The event involved 100 citizens, including 100 participants from the city of Copenhagen, Denmark.

**Location / Dates:** The event took place in Copenhagen, Denmark, from 11/12/2019

**Short description:** The aim of the event was to do public campaign and hand out the EU charter of Fundamental rights on the Central Station in Denmark on International Human Rights Day. During this event we met with citizens from all over Denmark and discuss the charter. This kind of campaign on the street, and have a conversation of the one who normally don't participate in public meetings and conferences.

## **Event 11**

**Participation:** The event involved 19 citizens, including 8 participants from Sweden, 2 from Lithuania, 2 from Denmark, 7 from Poland.

**Location / Dates:** The event took place in Brussels, Belgium from 27/01/2020 to 28/01/2020

**Short description:** The aim of the event was to bring together youth participants from the Baltic region to discuss the term of solidarity in Europe and how they understand and interpret solidarity.

### **Event 12**

**Participation:** The event involved 33 citizens, including 2 from Italy, 2 from the Netherlands, 18 from Denmark, 2 from Germany, 1 from Poland, 2 from Romania, 1 from France, 1 from Spain, 2 from the UK, 1 from Greece, 1 from Finland.

**Location / Dates:** The event took place in Online across Europe from 28/04/2020 to 28/04/2020

**Short description:** The aim of the event was facilitate an online workshop among young Europeans on the rights you have as European citizens, also during a global pandemic.

To protect and fight for your rights you must know them. At this online event the focus was on the youth of Europe and to make these aware of their rights as Europeans with the aim of raising awareness and make them knowledgeable so that they may be able to reclaim the now limited rights post Covid-19.

The 'lab' format contained both a webinar format where our partners from European civic forum gave an informative presentation of the rights and where the youth were able to debate these amongst themselves. Afterwards we did a communication workshop where the participants got skilled in making their voices heard in the public debate so that they received the tools to themselves become ambassadors of European rights.

### **Event 13**

**Participation:** The event involved 57 citizens, however 98 registered, including 2 from France, 72 from DK, 1 from Greece, 3 from Italy, 3 from Germany, 4 from Spain, 2 from UK, 2 from Belgium, 4 from Portugal, 1 from Serbia, 3 from Poland, 1 from Croatia, 1 from Romania, 1 from the Netherlands and 1 from Sweden.

**Location / Dates:** The event took place in Online across Europe, from 09/05/2020 to 09/05/2020

**Short description:** The aim of the event was to discuss the European identity crisis during and after Covid-19

At this event we invited prominent cultural public figures to share their thoughts and analyses of how the Covid-19 crisis will affect not only our European identity but also democracy itself in Europe.

The crisis awakened a global collective anxiety and has resulted in many questions about society that are now more relevant than ever. How does the crisis influence globalization? Is it working against or with globalization? What happens with Europe? What is not happening with Europe? Is the crisis in favour of the nation state or the European community? On Europe day the 9th of May, we invited citizens to a debate about the corona crisis and its influence on European identity. Which repercussions should we expect or fear will be due to the closing of European borders? Will the nation states cut themselves off from each other in the future or conversely be more aware and positive about European common solutions? What should we interpret after the criticism of the EU and its handling of the situation, the internal European conflicts like Hungary who neglects European values, or the economic disunity on euro-obligations? To put it differently, will the crisis confirm a missing European teamwork or speed the process towards more visible European common values?

To discuss these questions, we invited two Europeans and experts: first Rosa Balfour is the director of Carnegie Europe. Her fields of expertise include European politics, institutions, and foreign and security policy. Her current research focuses on the relationship between domestic politics and Europe's global role.

Miguel Otero-Iglesias is Senior Analyst at the Elcano Royal Institute and Professor at IE School of Global and Public Affairs. Otero-Iglesias originates from both Spain and Switzerland and has if any felt the division; for what do you do when you feel like a Southern European, but think like a Northern European?

### **Event 14**

**Participation:** The event involved 83 citizens from all over Europe. (do not have the Countries officially registered, as it was an event happening on a webpage, where people couldn't register)

**Location / Dates:** The event took place in Amsterdam, Holland (online), from 09/05/2020 to 09/05/2020

**Short description:** The aim of the event was to explore how art can make the dialogue on our European values.

In Amsterdam we had a second Connect Europe event planned on the 9th of May. During this event we were going to showcase different artistic impressions on the charter of fundamental rights, have a musician sing a song about freedom and have a discussion with an expert panel discuss the future of the charter. Although the event didn't happen physically because of the corona regulations we made it happen by making it entirely an online event. The online event was part of a bigger effort with a lot of outreach by European Cultural Foundation via the platform europeday.eu On this platform we had a Connect Europe page where we discuss the future of our



European rights via different digital inputs. Placing the artworks online, working with video's, writing and other forms of input. Thereby we continued the conversation on our fundamental rights in a digital and creative sphere.

### **Event 15**

**Participation:** The event involved 77 citizens, including citizens 3 from Austria, 4 from Belgium, 1 from Bulgaria, 1 Czech Republic, 8 from Denmark, 1 Estonia, 1 Finland, 5 from France, 19 Germany, 4 from Greece, 1 from Lithuania, 2 from Luxembourg, 2 the Netherlands, 4 from Poland, 5 from Portugal, 4 from Romania, 3 from Spain, 1 from Sweden, and 4 who have not identified their country.

**Location / Dates:** The event took place in Cologne, Germany (online), from 11/05/2020 to 11/05/2020

**Short description:** The aim of the event was to focus on the chapter of Citizens Rights in the Charter.

At what would become the first online conference in the Connect Europe project we exterminated Chapter Five on Citizens' Rights in the EU Charter on May 11.

The chapter underlines that transparency is vital for a strong democracy because citizens need to be properly informed in order to practice active citizenship and build responsible, informed opinions. Openness and accessibility to government documents are necessary for the functioning of a democracy society where governments are held accountable!

Therefore and perhaps especially in a time of crisis such as this where the decisions are being made quickly and with great effect, we must debate how Citizens rights are affected and for that we need transparency in decision making processes.

Therefore, the partner from Democracy International persisted with their planned debate on Citizens rights but moved the event online and added a Covid-19 perspective.

*"I was really shocked when I found out how secrecy is practiced on all political levels at the EU."*

*"It's impossible to provide to the public reasons for decisions if there isn't good record-keeping."*

*"In the overall toolbox that citizens have available other than voting every 5 years, it's a very substantial right to be able to petition the European Parliament."*

These are some quotes from our speakers from the dynamic online event that underlined just how transparency is necessary for a healthy, thriving democracy. Unfortunately they also underline the current issues of a system that is based on values of democratic participation and citizens insight but practices secrecy and closed doors. This is the core take away from the debate - we must do better to ensure transparency in all levels of decision makings!

Further the participants were asked to participate in a poll on their thoughts on the transparency in EU decision making processes. The answers can be seen in the graph to the rights and on <https://www.democracy-international.org/connect-europe-20-years-eu-citizens-rights>.

*The program for the online debate:*

*1. Strengthening and raising awareness of citizens' rights in Europe*

*Introduction and Moderation by Daniela Vancic*

*Experts:*

*Member of European Parliament, Daniel Freund - Right to petition EP (Article 44)*

*Marie Jünemann, Mehr Demokratie - Right to access documents (Article 42)*

*Helen Darbshire, Access Info Europe - Right to good administration (Article 41)*

*2. Virtual European Public Sphere – Open discussion*

*Moderation by Anne Hardt*

*Topic: "How can the EU Charter protect citizens' rights, especially in times of international crises?"*

### **Event 16**

**Participation:** The event involved 100 citizens (see zoom attendance list), 145 registered including 100 from Denmark, 2 from Italy, 2 from Poland, 6 from Germany, 4 from the Netherlands, 1 from Norway, 1 from Ireland,

from 2 Greece, 1 from Spain, 3 from Romania, 3 from Belgium, 9 from Portugal, 2 from France, 4 from the UK, 1 from Finland, 1 from Hungary, 1 from Sweden

**Location / Dates:** The event took place in Brussels, Belgium (online) from 26/05/2020 to 26/05/2020

**Short description:** The aim of the event was to finalize the discussions and debates we had, had for the project period.

For 20 years the Charter of Fundamental rights has ensured Europeans fundamental rights as they are laid out in the 7 chapters of the Charter. From Equality (chap. 3) to Dignity (chap. 1) we have been able to draw on the institutional rights in our fight for a more just world. But in what would have been a jubilee of reflections on the Charter, Covid-19 has entered and altered the discussion in a fundamental way.

If anything, the conversation centering around our rights has only gotten even more relevant in a time where governments all over Europe are using the Covid-19 crisis to justify their attacks on our fundamental rights. Now more than ever we must continue and intensify our efforts to bring visibility to and debate our shared values as they are formulated in the rights of the Charter.

Nyt Europa together with our European partners in Connect Europe that represents a wide range of European civil society actors therefor presented a conference on the importance of the Charter of Fundamental rights on May 26.

What would have been our final conference hosted in Brussels became an online conference centering around both historical perspectives on the charter, the current crisis situation and a perspective on the future of the charter.

Together with MEP's, experts, and civil society we explored the relevant rights issues as highlighted by Covid-19. How do we ensure that the current health crisis does not become an institutional crisis of rights? How can we in international solidarity fight to protect our shared values and rights?

After inputs from members of the European Parliament on how they see some countries taking advantage of the crisis and testimonies from activist on how their work have been affected by Covid several points was made clear:

There is a complex paradox in the response to the crisis. We must protect some rights like the right to health by compromising others like freedom rights.

Some countries like Hungary and Poland is taking advantage of the situation to suppress civil society.

The pre-existing inequalities is not only being worsened and highlighted during these times; they are themselves reasons for why the crisis has hit some countries and communities extra hard.

Watch and learn more on the final event below in the summarising video for the Connect Europe project.

### **The program:**

*Part I: Introducing the Charter. The importance of our fundamental rights and why they should be re-actualized in the light of COVID –*

*Conversations with experts.*

- 15.00-15.20 Welcome and introduction to the project by Julie Rosenkilde
- 15.20-15.30 UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR), Regional Representative for Europe, Birgit Van Hout
- 15.30-15.40 Morten Kjærum, director Raoul Wallenberg Institute
- 15.40-15.50 Questions/comments

*Part II: What is going on in Europe? Looking back at 20 years of fundamental rights and towards the future of activism – Conversation with European activists.*

- 15.50-15.55 Poland – Marta Lempart from Polish Womens Strike
- 15.55-16.00 Hungary – Veronika Mora from Civilizacio
- 16.00-16.05 Greece – Christos Lazaridis from the Forum of Refugees
- 16.05-16.10: Denmark - Emma Holten Danish activist from Oxfam Ibis
- 16.10-16.20 questions and comments

*Part III: How do we ensure that the current health crisis does not become an institutional crisis of rights? What is the political response? A discussion with members of the Parliament.*

- 16.20-16.55 Discussion with MEPS
- Karen Melchior, Renew, Denmark
- Isabel Carvalhais S&D, Portugal
- Margrete Auken, European Greens, Denmark

### **Event 17**

**Participation:** The event involved 25 citizens from Denmark

**Location / Dates:** The event took place in Frederiksberg, Denmark, from 11/06/2020 to 11/06/2020

**Short description:** The aim of the event was to discuss justice in corona times

This event took place in Frederiksberg, Copenhagen on June 11.

In the midst of the re-opening of Denmark from the Covid-related restrictions and in the middle of the debate on how the EU member state could and should cooperate on a rescue-package for the crisis-stricken continent, the danish partner hosted the previously postponed event on Chapter 6: justice.

It was hosted as a small-scale event in the outdoors, due to the continued restrictions. We had to cancel the event in March due to corona, but more than ever it seemed relevant to discuss Justice in term of COVID 19. More precisely, economic justice and the recovery plan from the EU and how it would affect the European solidarity. Visited by Magnus Barsøe, cand.merc. from Copenhagen Business School and holding a master's degree international journalistikc from City University in London, the event focused on the economic challenges facing EU because of the Covid-crisis.

The diagnose from mr. Barsøe was clear:

Europe is at a cross-road. Either we will stand together in solidarity to prevent an economic and fiscal crisis much worse than the one from 2008. Or we will see the European solidarity pay the price resulting in increased inequality and a prolonged economic downfall.

In the end it is a question of our sense of justice. Should the countries who have no role in the current health crisis pay the biggest price or should we come together in times of crises in unity and let the broadest shoulders carry the heavy lifting?

*NB:*

*This event replaced the planned conference on March 27 at the danish Parliament.*

*The event centered on the aniversary of the charter and the different types of justice (social, climate, tax and economic-justice).*

*With 100+ participants pending and expert input from people such as danish MEP's and MP's as well as civil society organisations, etc., both formal speeches, debates and informal workshops was planned to gather inputs on the charter.*

*The event was cancelled due to Covid-19*

### **Event 18**

**Participation:** The event involved 535.485 indirect citizens

**Location / Dates:** The event took place online in Europe from 01/03/2019 to 30/06/2020

**Short description:** This activity is a combination of online and campaign activities, which has the aim of meeting citizens indirect and telling the story of the project's activity. We had made an online platform called eurights.org, where most of the information is placed. We had made videos about each conference which also underlined each chapter in the charter. The videos has been shared on YouTube, on Facebook and on various webpages. We have also done media outreach and different statements online which has reach many citizens indirectly throughout the project period.