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The Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) programme was launched by the European Commission in 2021 and will run for seven years (until 2027). The programme aims to develop and support open, rights-based, democratic, equal and inclusive societies based on the rule of law. This includes a dynamic and empowered civil society, encouraging citizens to participate democratically, civically and socially, and nurturing the rich diversity of European society based on our shared values, history and experiences.

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In Berlin, the European Academy is a well-established location for meetings of all kinds for an international clientele – addressing always current and relevant topics. As a disseminator of knowledge the Academy aims to explain policies and politics and to communicate European political connections. By strengthening the critical ability of each individual citizen, EAB in this way makes its contribution towards a vital civil society in Germany and in Europe.

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EUROPE ON TRACK 2023

INTERRAIL MEETS
POLITICS
HOW TO IMPROVE
GENDER EQUALITY IN EUROPE

THE PROJECT

The project invited and encouraged young citizens to think about gender equality and European integration and to participate in decision-making processes. Young Europeans literally got on a train that passed through six countries. After preparational meetings including public events in the respective countries each partner sent three participants on the eight days journey.

A diverse team of youngsters between 18 and 26 years old took advantage of meetings with experts, activists and politicians to collect and discuss different approaches in improving gender equality in different European countries. Daily interactive tasks connected the tours and provided opportunities to exchange experiences on the track.

Tour A started in Prague and went via Munich and Torino. Tour B began its adventure in Berlin and went via Brussels and Angoulême to Barcelona. Here both tours met and the Spanish participants joined the group.

In Spain the group did not only meet more activists but also representatives of the EU Commission and the Ministry of Igualdad in Madrid. Preparing for these deliberative discussions the group was trained on how to present and debate in political surroundings.

Participants discussed the diversity of Europe and used European railway lines - from Eurocity to local trains - transforming them into a communication network and connected different stations for this adventurous trip.



OUR AIM

Taking into account the efforts the European Union already put into the improvement of gender equality and

Respecting the directives on gender equality currently decided

Participants in the project Europe on track 2023 believe that there is still a lot to do in order to reach gender equality.

With these proposals we want to raise awareness for the wider perspective of gender going beyond the binary. We want to put emphasis on precarity, mental loads, and health care in dignity.

We hope to contribute to further discussions on these topics in the Council of the European Union and beyond.

These proposals will be communicated not only to various national and European agencies but also to NGOs in order to promote the ideas.

GERMANY

LOCAL PR ACTIVITIES

Partners promoted the project to local communities before, during and after the project journey.

The official kick-off took place in Berlin. On the occasion of the International Day of Democracy Sep 15 we had the chance to discuss the topic of gender equality and the currently published EU directives related to equality with 50 young people in the Berlin Parliament House.

**PROPOSAL 1****CODES OF CONDUCT**

Implementing mandatory workshops on creating a Code of Conduct is vital across schools, universities, and all state institutions. These workshops emphasize the significance of gender equality and diversity. The goal is for each institution to articulate its unique objectives and strategies, enabling the formulation of individualized Codes of Conduct that promote a secure environment for all genders in educational and professional settings.

This process contributes to the development of knowledge and awareness, fostering a culture of inclusivity. By empowering institutions to establish their own guidelines, the approach to gender equality becomes more nuanced and context-specific. Furthermore, the workshops aim to make laws pertaining to equality more accessible and adaptable to the diverse environments in which we work or study. In essence, this initiative not only enforces the principles of gender equality but also nurtures a proactive approach, ensuring that regulations align with the specific needs and dynamics of each institution.

PROPOSAL 2**CHANGING PERCEPTIONS**

Transforming the perception of "gender" from a binary system involves redefining the legal term to encompass the entire spectrum. This paradigm shift necessitates the inclusion of a broader array of categories consistently in state and EU documents. By recognizing gender as a spectrum rather than a binary, legal frameworks can better reflect the diverse identities and experiences of individuals.

In practical terms, this means updating official documents to include a more comprehensive set of gender categories, ensuring that legal recognition aligns with the fluidity and complexity of gender identities. This inclusive approach acknowledges the existence and rights of individuals beyond the traditional binary understanding of gender. By embracing this change, both at the state and EU levels, society takes a significant step towards creating more affirming and accommodating environments for everyone, regardless of where they fall on the gender spectrum.

BRUSSELS**WORKSHOPS WITH EWLA**

On Thursday evening in Brussels we had the chance to meet three female lawyers, all members of the European Women Lawyers Association (EWLA). Eliana Zatschler is one of the co-founders and currently president of EWLA. This corporation of European Female Lawyers aims to influence European policy and legislation concerning gender equality. They organize networking events allowing women in power to meet. With their expertise they comment on European Commission's drafts of gender related directives.

We were hosted by Kirsten Baubkus-Gérard, chairwoman of the Board of djb Brussels Regional Group (Deutscher Juristinnenbund e.V.) and her colleague Sabine Overkämping. Ms Overkämping's job brings her right into the heart of European politics as she reports from the EU Council to the German Federal Assembly (Bundesrat).

BRUSSELS**WORKSHOPS WITH EWLA**

We discussed several topics on gender equality which have not been addressed by the European Commission yet. We talked about gender inequality in the family context such as the pension gap and the imbalance regarding the distribution of care work. Eliana focused on gender inequality in the corporate world and the lack of female leadership. Afterwards, we had the opportunity to bring our concerns regarding the inclusivity of their approaches to the table and invited them to look beyond the gender binary and heteronormativity.

PROPOSAL 3**SHARING THE PARENTING EFFECTIVELY**

Promoting better conditions for women in business involves educating and supporting young women in this regard. Advocating for men to take a minimum of six months parental leave when the child is six months or one year old offers multiple benefits, such as sharing the mental load, enabling women to re-enter the job market sooner, and strengthening the bond between child and father. The implementation of legal obligations or financial incentives, like 80% of net salary during six months parental leave up to a specified ceiling (e.g., EUR 2,500), ensures job security and pension rights, with an additional EUR 1,000/month per family for the first three years of the child's life. Similar initiatives should address freelancers, including increased maternity leave and support for achieving better work-life balance through flexible hours and financial aid. Cultivating an inclusive and equal opportunity culture is essential for a diverse and fair professional environment. Creating awareness and encouraging businesses to prioritize the well-being and advancement of women requires collaborative efforts from governmental bodies and private enterprises in implementing and enforcing gender equality policies.

ON THE TRACKS



Follow the journey on our Instagram Highlights:

<https://www.instagram.com/stories/highlights/18005609165001299/>

ANGOULEME

WORKSHOP FRANCE 1

On Saturday Sep 30, we attended a forum hosted by different associations and we had some great conversations with feminist associations. In the first workshop with the CIDFF (Information Center on the rights of women and families), we explored the reality of financial struggles, especially for women, and how this often leads to the violation of their rights.

The other workshop was with Le Planning familial. We talked about contraception. We brainstormed words related to the topic and discussed how European states promote and provide access to contraception, including different types of male contraception.

Le planning familial is an inclusive organization that embraces all gender identities. However, the association stirred controversy when it released a poster asserting that "men could also be pregnant", depicting a transgender man in a couple expecting a child. This sparked debate in France due to traditional views on gender roles and societal norms, challenging established perceptions of parenthood and gender identity.

PROPOSAL 4

SEX EDUCATION

Education forms the foundation of societal understanding, and thus, sex education must be integrated into the mandatory school curriculum as a distinct subject. It is imperative to commence educating children on this subject from a very young age, examining it from diverse perspectives. While some European countries focus solely on the biological aspect, a comprehensive approach is needed. The curriculum should extend beyond biological aspects to encompass psychological, emotional, and social dimensions. Additionally, providing opportunities to educate parents on effective communication about this topic is essential. This empowers parents to engage with their children, fostering an environment of open dialogue and mutual respect. By incorporating sex education into the curriculum and extending it to parents, we contribute to the holistic development of children, equipping them with a well-rounded understanding of sexuality and interpersonal relationships from an early age.

ANGOULEME

WORKSHOP FRANCE 2



We visited the art installation "Les Causeuses" newly recognized by UNESCO. "Les Causeuses", designed by Delphine Joseph, is a public kiosk about gender-based violence. This project was initiated by "The 8th of March" collective and sponsored by the city via public participation.

ANGOULEME**WORKSHOP FRANCE 2**

The purpose of the project is to raise awareness for gender-based violence. It invites people to meet, exchange ideas, talk, and so on. The pictures on the inside of the installation show texts from victims of gender-based violence. The images on the outside show the movement of plastic around barbed wires, symbolizing different stages of freeing oneself from gender-based violence. The collective took us through the process of how they came up with the idea to its realization. We left the place full of motivation and rage to combat gender-based violence.

We strongly encourage you to visit this masterpiece if you pass by Angoulême and to initiate a project of your own!

PROPOSAL 5**GENDER VIOLENCE
CRIMES**

Rehabilitation of domestic violence offenders is a very difficult task when it comes to gender violence crimes. We need good psychological therapy specifically related to the rehabilitation of offenders. The job of a criminal psychologist is unclear most of the time, and some specific therapies have been developed on this particular topic. For example, restorative justice has been proven to help reinforce the therapy benefits by getting the offender and the victim closer in a controlled space. Therapy can help offenders see and understand their victims, identify their wrongs, and perhaps make a real change for their future. Furthermore, the utilization of group therapy, which involves locating a support group for victims of similar experiences, has proven to be efficacious in fostering progress and facilitating learning from each other's experiences. We have to find an effective way for victims to be unreachable for the aggressors, even by phone or social media. That is the only way they can redo their life. Graduated freedom and control are crucial in the rehabilitation process. It is vital to closely track rehabilitation progress, particularly during stages of conditional freedom.

PROPOSAL 6**MORE RESEARCH**

Expanding empirical evaluation and research on gender-related issues beyond the binary system is crucial. This extension opens avenues to identify differences and discrimination prevalent in economic, healthcare, and social domains. By delving deeper into the experiences of individuals beyond traditional gender norms, we gain insights that can inform more inclusive policies and practices.

This comprehensive approach is key to developing a nuanced understanding of gender inequality. It involves examining how economic structures, healthcare systems, and societal norms impact those who do not conform to binary gender norms. By shedding light on these nuances, research contributes to the formulation of targeted interventions and policies that address the unique challenges faced by individuals across the diverse gender spectrum. In essence, fostering a more inclusive and informed perspective through empirical research is instrumental in dismantling systemic biases. It not only enhances our comprehension of gender dynamics but also guides the development of effective strategies to mitigate discrimination and promote equality across various sectors.

BRUSSELS**WORKSHOP AT ASBL.
BRUZELLES**

We had an opportunity to visit one of the pioneers in the gender equality sector in Brussels, Bruzelles ASBL. Bruzelles is an association that actively fights against menstrual precariousness by collecting menstrual products and distributing them for free and in dignity to menstruating people living in precarious conditions. Bruzelles also fights against the stigmatization of menstruation. This work is being done via workshops with diverse communities by raising #awareness on menstrual insecurity/ poverty, inviting debate, upcycling fabric and making sustainable menstrual products.

The team and the director had a great and engaged discussion on the issue, so many questions were asked and responded to. We shared our experience and contribution on how to approach the issue as young concerned people on different levels (political, economical, social level).

We left with so much knowledge and we are excited to act upon the issue, share our input with other young people part of the team and carry on the discussion back in our respective communities.

BRUSSELS

WORKSHOP AT ASBL.
BRUZELLES

PROPOSAL 7

FREE MENSTRUAL
PRODUCTS

Providing free menstrual products for all menstruating individuals is essential, aligning with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, emphasizing equal dignity for all. Menstruation is not a choice, and economic challenges often prevent access to hygienic products, compromising dignity. Ensuring easy availability, such as at pharmacies, addresses this issue. By eliminating financial barriers, society acknowledges the basic human right to menstrual hygiene, promoting equality and preserving the dignity of all individuals, regardless of economic circumstances. This initiative strives to create a more inclusive and compassionate environment, recognizing the importance of accessible menstrual products in upholding fundamental human rights.

Thinking of
Gender
Equality

woman oppression
 freedom sexual expression
 working conditions
 a norm
 hands in hands
 glass ceiling
 human-rights
 equal approach
 social status
 a human right
 workers rights
 value
 rights
 opinions
 dignity
 freedom
 respect
 discrimination
 responsibility
 empowerment
 justice
 equality
 dignity freedom
 equity
 privilege
 development
 gender gap
 liberty
 expectation
 equal pay
 breaking barriers
 identity diversity
 employment opportunities
 no sexualized violence
 equality for all
 fraternity

PROPOSAL 8**MENSTRUATION
TIME OFF**

Menstruation encompasses more than just physical pain; it often involves mood swings and increased fatigue. The body requires additional rest as it undergoes heightened activity during this period. Many individuals find themselves incapacitated by menstrual pain, making it necessary to stay in bed. Relying solely on painkillers is not a healthy solution.

Recognizing the natural need for rest during menstruation, we advocate for every menstruating person to be entitled to time off from work, particularly during the initial two days of their menstrual cycle. This policy acknowledges the holistic impact of menstruation on an individual's well-being, fostering a workplace environment that prioritizes health and accommodates the diverse needs of its workforce. Such measures contribute to a more understanding and supportive work culture, promoting both physical and mental well-being.

PROPOSAL 9**HEALTHCARE**

Establishing healthcare programs to assist individuals grappling with uncertainty about their gender or sexuality is paramount. These programs should create a safe space where people of all genders can openly discuss their concerns and challenges. Ensuring accessibility, these support services should be available through phone or online platforms, providing a means for individuals to connect with a trusted person. The development of a dedicated online platform for assistance becomes instrumental in connecting those in need with understanding and supportive resources.

Such initiatives address the diverse needs of individuals navigating questions related to gender or sexuality, offering a confidential and inclusive space for dialogue and guidance. By incorporating both digital and telephonic access, these programs strive to make support widely available, promoting mental and emotional well-being for everyone irrespective of their gender or sexual identity.

PROPOSAL 10**EXTENDING LAWS I.**

Expanding laws beyond heteronormativity is crucial for fostering inclusivity. This includes extending marriage rights to homosexual couples, eliminating discriminatory barriers and ensuring equal legal recognition for diverse genders and sexualities. By broadening legal frameworks to encompass all relationships, society recognizes and respects the rights and identities of individuals irrespective of their sexual orientation. This step not only promotes equality but also reflects evolving societal values, contributing to a more inclusive and affirming legal landscape. Embracing diversity in relationships through comprehensive legal reforms is a fundamental stride towards building a more equitable and accepting society for all.

PROPOSAL 11**NO UNIFORM LEGAL PROCEDURE**

Standardizing legal procedures for transgender individuals and investing in psychological support are crucial steps in fostering inclusivity. Deregulating these procedures uniformly streamlines the legal journey for transgender people, ensuring consistency and reducing unnecessary obstacles in obtaining recognition and rights that align with their gender identity.

Simultaneously, allocating resources to psychological support acknowledges the unique challenges faced by transgender individuals. This investment aims to enhance mental well-being and facilitate a smoother process of self-discovery and identity affirmation. By combining legal reforms with psychological support, society can create a more supportive environment that respects and values the diverse experiences of transgender individuals, promoting their rights and mental health in tandem. This comprehensive approach contributes to building a more equitable and compassionate society for everyone.

MADRID

MEETING THE EU
COMMISSION

On Wednesday, Oct 4 we have been invited to the EU Commission in Madrid and had the chance to discuss with Joaquín MONTERO REY of the Departamento de Protocolo y Logística / Publicaciones our projects. Participants felt strongly empowered by having the chance to speak to an official representative of the European Union.

PROPOSAL 12

AWARENESS RAISING

Allocating increased budget funds for awareness campaigns on gender-based violence, particularly through artistic means, is imperative. Art serves as a powerful medium to convey messages, evoke emotions, and spark conversations. By investing more resources into artistic initiatives, society can effectively raise awareness about the prevalence and impact of gender-based violence.

These funds would support the creation and promotion of artworks, performances, and projects that shed light on the various facets of this issue. Whether through visual arts, theater, or other creative expressions, the goal is to engage the public and encourage dialogue. Increased budgetary support enables the development of impactful campaigns that not only inform but also inspire collective action against gender-based violence, fostering a culture of empathy, understanding, and ultimately, positive changes.

PROPOSAL 13

GENDER STUDIES

Mandatory interdisciplinary gender study programs aim to delve into the multifaceted realm of gender, addressing aspects such as diversity, stereotypes, societal issues, and state-level considerations. These programs foster discussions that transcend traditional boundaries, providing a platform for sociological and biological viewpoints on the profound question of what constitutes gender. By merging scientific perspectives, these initiatives seek to cultivate awareness, leaving discriminatory cultural norms in the rearview mirror. The goal is to enlighten individuals, enabling them to embrace a progressive mindset that aligns with the ideals of the European Union. Through sociological analyses, these programs unravel the intricacies of gender dynamics, fostering a deeper understanding of its societal implications. This holistic approach not only dismantles stereotypes but also propels society towards a more inclusive and enlightened future, thereby contributing to the overarching objectives of the European Union.

TORINO

WORKSHOP ITALY



PROPOSAL 14**EXTENDING LAWS II.**

Broadening anti-discrimination laws involves the creation of specific legislation explicitly prohibiting hatred directed at particular sexualities and genders. By enacting targeted legal measures, society aims to address and counteract prejudice and bias against individuals based on their sexual orientation and gender identity. This targeted approach reinforces the commitment to fostering an inclusive and respectful environment.

These specialized laws serve to amplify the protection granted by general anti-discrimination statutes. They acknowledge the unique challenges faced by individuals of diverse sexualities and genders, ensuring that legal safeguards are attuned to the nuances of these experiences. The objective is to create a legal framework that not only prohibits discrimination broadly but also provides targeted protection against hatred and bias directed at specific aspects of an individual's identity. This comprehensive legal strategy contributes to building a more equitable and supportive societal foundation.

PROPOSAL 15**EXCHANGING
KNOWLEDGE**

Strategic investment in exchange-oriented funds for schools and organizations dedicated to gender and sex education is paramount. Initiating comprehensive programs to disseminate education, knowledge, and practical initiatives across schools throughout the European Union, facilitated by active organizations in neighboring countries, is crucial. This initiative aims to foster a collaborative approach, exchanging diverse perspectives on gender from various nations. By facilitating this exchange, the EU becomes more interconnected, and the awareness of gender-related issues becomes more international. The collaboration enhances the collective understanding of the intricacies surrounding gender, fostering a more inclusive and informed society. This interconnectedness not only strengthens the bonds within the EU but also promotes a broader understanding of gender dynamics on a global scale. It is through such collaborative efforts that education and awareness can transcend borders, contributing to a more enlightened and interconnected world regarding gender issues.


MADRID

**WORKSHOP AT
RED CROSS**

On Thursday Oct 5 in morning we visited the Red Cross in Madrid. There we met Eva, a social worker who is in charge of the gender equality department. She told us about their projects that aim to help and empower women in social difficulties. The Red Cross offers help in various areas, including psychological, physical and social support.

Another important project they manage in Madrid is ATENPRO. This is a service of protection of and attention to people who have experienced gender-based violence. They can receive a special phone that records and locates the caller in critical situations. The call center is available 24/7 and managed by the Red Cross.

The Red Cross Madrid currently hosts a photo exhibition by photographer José Luis Fernandez Liz on the topic of gender equality. He presents some very interesting pictures of women from various countries with regard to the United Nations sustainable development goal #5


BELGIUM

LOCAL PR ACTIVITIES

We implemented a small, not representative poll, around fifty people agreed to answer our questions. Of these, the majority identified themselves as female, another group as non-binary and the remainder as male. All the people interviewed said that gender inequalities persist and gave different examples of areas where these inequalities occur. In this sense, inequalities are visible in both the public and private spheres and are the result of sexist prejudices rooted in mentalities. There have been some notable improvements, such as access to education and healthcare. However, as a result of systemic sexism, many inequalities remain and govern Belgian society. The most talked-about was pay inequality, but there were also discussions about the over-representation of women in part-time jobs and the glass ceiling, which means that few or no women have access to senior positions. Several people suggested that gender inequalities should be seen from an intersectional approach, arguing that age, disability, ethnicity, race, social and economic status could all lead to aggravated forms of discrimination. Various proposals were put forward: -Combating stigmatisation, stereotypes and prejudice by educating the public; -Rebalance inequalities through a quota policy.

SPAIN

LOCAL PR ACTIVITIES

We presented the aim of the Europe on track project and the proposals that have emerged, we asked the opinion of the young people attending the workshop and we extended it to the people of Madrid in general through random street interviews asking them if they agreed with the proposals or how necessary they are on a scale from 1 to 5, 1 being strong disagreement and 5 being complete agreement. We also asked their opinion in an informal chat. We developed a workshop in Madrid to promote projects that tackle gender equality issues at different levels. We involved 29 young people who showed us their ideas that respond to their concerns related to this area. The basic points that will serve as a first draft for writing the project proposals were established. Specifically, three proposals have been made on the topic of equality, that will generate the proposals that we are going to present in the first Erasmus+ YOUTH call in 2024

CZECH REPUBLIC

LOCAL PR ACTIVITIES

On Friday 20th October 2023, a debate titled "Gender equality: How to use femininity in business" was held in the Karlovy Vary innovation center Inion. The aim of the event was for three female business speakers to share their business experiences with the participants and to demonstrate that it is possible to stay in the industry even with a feminine approach. Life coach Lucie Königová, owner of organic flower shop Nikola Al Haboubi Florianová, and owner of the brand Tulouš Štěpánka Kolesnyk Pitterová agreed that their approach to work is different from that of the opposite sex. As one of the topics, they mentioned the cycle, which affects the female body and actions, and women are thus unable to function the same throughout the month. All present agreed that the Czech labor market should pay more attention to well-being. All the speakers also agreed that they would never be where they are without their male partners. Both sexes complement each other, but in the area of business, it is not good to mix two worlds and approaches.

MADRID

MEETING THE PRESIDENCY

With meetings in the representation of the EU Commission and in the Ministry of Equality in Madrid, the Europe on Track 2023 project came to an end.

During their trips, participants discussed and consulted with experts and policy makers. As a result, the participants presented the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the EU, represented by the Ministry, with a catalogue of 15 proposals for improving gender equality.

The collected proposals contribute to raising awareness of the broader perspective of gender, including beyond the binary. The focus is on precarity, psychological distress, and health care with dignity.

The project partners hope to contribute to further discussions on these issues in the Council of the European Union and beyond. Thus the proposals will subsequently be forwarded to various national and European agencies and NGOs to promote the ideas.

MADRID

MEETING THE PRESIDENCY

The appreciation of the project by the representatives of the Ministry Irene Zugasti and Silvia Pérez, Members of the General Sub-Directorate of International Relations, and Alberto Martín, Assistant Deputy Director of LGBTBI Rights has been an important motivation for the young participants to continue actively working for a Europe of values.



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