

EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

(To be filled in and uploaded as deliverable in the Portal Grant Management System, at the due date foreseen in the system.)

 *Please provide one sheet per event (one event = one workpackage = one lump sum).*

PROJECT	
Project name and acronym:	Volunteering Values Think Tank — VOLT
Participant:	EUROPEAN CENTER FOR SOCIAL SCIENCE, CULTURE AND SPORT (EQUALINE)
PIC number:	887557664

EVENT DESCRIPTION	
Event number:	1
Event name:	VOLT - Volunteering Values Think Tank
Type:	Two (2) Workshops & one (1) Conference
In situ/online:	In situ
Location:	Greece, Veria
Date(s):	3-day event (15-16-17 October 2023)
Website(s) (if any):	www.equaline.gr
Participants	
Female:	109
Male:	102
Non-binary:	4
From country 1 [Greece]:	34
From country 2 [Malta]:	6
From country 3 [Slovenia]:	81
From country 4 [Croatia]:	27
From country 5 [Bulgaria]:	67
...	
Total number of participants:	215
From total number of countries:	5
Description	
<i>Provide a short description of the event and its activities.</i>	

The three-day Volunteering Values Think Tank (VOLT) event, which took place in Veria, Greece, from 15 to 17 October 2023, served as a central platform to bring together participants from different backgrounds. Representatives from EQUALINE (Greece), BIRGU LOCAL COUNCIL (Malta), DRPDNM (Slovenia), Općina Kalnik (Croatia), and the Municipality of Belitsa (Bulgaria) came together with the common goal of fostering collective dialog and cooperation. Based on the importance of voluntarism and the values inherent to the European Union, the project aimed to emphasize the importance of unity, civic engagement, and the promotion of EU values. Each participating organization, representing their respective community, played an important role in enriching the discourse and contributing to the overarching goals of the VOLT initiative.

The 3-day event of **VOLT** was divided into *2 Workshops and 1 Conference* that aimed to the following objectives:

- Gather representatives from local authorities, experts, and the youth community to participate in the 3-day event.
- Allow the local youth to access information and advice on major EU topics, EU values, Volunteering values, opportunities for youth participation in voluntary synergies, and other EU initiatives.
- Connect local authorities, NGOs, and young people and transfer the European Dimension at the local level.
- Promote volunteering as a means of civic participation at local, national, and EU levels.
- Enrich the knowledge of young volunteers on the EU policy-making process, through the knowledge of the Europe 2020 strategy, and other European funds.
- Encourage cross-border voluntary and solidarity activities in the EU, responding to the impacts of COVID-19, contrasting Euroscepticism, and bonding around common values, democracy, equality, and gender balance.
- Support especially young people towards employability, and voluntary inclusion, by engaging them with local relevant actors.

- The event kicked off with an introductory workshop session dedicated to the VOLT project named **“EU FOR YOU”**. Mr. Stylianos–Sotirios Vasileiou, President of EQUALINE, initiated the event with a warm welcome to all participants. Following his introduction, representatives from the participating municipalities took the stage to introduce themselves and share insights into their respective roles. This opening set the tone for a collaborative and inclusive gathering. The next sessions were dedicated to exploring opportunities for EU funding, with a special focus on the EU CERV TT project and its priorities. In the framework of volunteering projects, the discussions extended to uncovering the priorities of the European Solidarity Corps (ESC), providing valuable insights into youth-centric initiatives. An important part of the day was dedicated to examining the impacts of COVID-19 on the EU and its youth, fostering a collective understanding of the challenges faced. Continuing with a spotlight on values, the day featured sessions that explored the alignment of youth and volunteering values within the broader European context. This part was complemented by an analysis of the specific needs of youth, deepening into the challenges and opportunities they encounter. The environment was intentionally interactive, encouraging participants to share their experiences and perspectives, and fostering a collaborative atmosphere. Real-world examples and best practices were showcased, highlighting successful projects that have effectively addressed the evolving needs of youth, particularly in the context of the pandemic.

- The day featured a dynamic **Roundtable Workshop titled "VOLTERS!"** where youths, NGO representatives, and stakeholders engaged in collaborative discussions on key topics related to voluntary strategies and employment opportunities. This interactive session aimed to bring together diverse perspectives and insights, fostering a dialogue that addresses the intersection of youth engagement, volunteering, and future employment prospects. Participants had the opportunity to share their experiences, challenges, and successes, creating a platform for mutual learning. During the workshop, upcoming opportunities for volunteerism were presented, offering valuable information and insights into avenues for civic participation. The focus was not only on current opportunities but also on strategies to enhance the impact of volunteerism on personal and professional development. This Roundtable Workshop strengthened the connection between youths and NGOs, facilitating a meaningful exchange of ideas and practices. By exploring voluntary strategies and employment opportunities in the field, the session aimed to inspire actionable initiatives that contribute to the holistic development of young individuals while addressing broader societal needs. The collaborative nature of "VOLTERS!" emphasized the importance of collective efforts in shaping the future landscape of youth engagement and volunteerism.

On Day 3, the **"VALUES in YOU"** Conference took center stage, featuring a presentation of the developed methodologies. This conference provided a space for meaningful discussions among VOLT actors, encouraging the exchange of insights and best practices. The agenda also included a vital reflection on EU and Volunteering values, emphasizing their significance in shaping impactful initiatives.

As the discussions continued, there was a focused exploration of responses and future solutions to the consequences of COVID-19. The conference served as a space for participants to collectively address the challenges posed by the pandemic and strategize on resilient and adaptive approaches moving forward. This event encapsulated a holistic approach, combining the unveiling of innovative methodologies with thoughtful discussions on values and pragmatic solutions to current global challenges. The "VALUES in YOU" Conference aimed to inspire, inform, and foster collaboration among participants, leaving a lasting impact on the landscape of youth engagement and volunteering initiatives. The day concluded on a collaborative note with a visit by the municipal representatives to Veria's hall, where they engaged in a fruitful dialogue with the Mayor of Veria about the VOLT project. This activity provided an opportunity for representatives to share their ideas, experiences, and insights, strengthening the bonds formed during the event. In a special gesture of appreciation, each municipality received a distinctive plaque dedicated to their invaluable participation in the VOLT project, symbolizing the collective effort and impact achieved through their collaboration.

HISTORY OF CHANGES		
VERSION	PUBLICATION DATE	CHANGE
1.0	01.04.2022	Initial version (new MFF).