

Invitation to join the “European Network for the Cohesion and Solidarity in Rural areas (ENSuRe)” under the Program Europe for Citizens

We are looking for:

- towns, municipalities or their twinning committees or networks
- other levels of local/regional authorities
- federations, associations of local authorities
- non-profit civil society organisations representing local authorities (with a written confirmation that they represent a public authority)

coming from the following countries: the 28 Member States of the European Union, EFTA countries, Serbia, Montenegro, and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Project objective:

The project serves the need for a greater involvement of citizens from **rural areas** in the development of a solidary Europe.

More precisely the Network of ten authorities (towns and regions) and civil society organizations from the EU and neighbouring countries will provide opportunities to address issues which are prevalent in rural areas and stand in the way of a solidary Europe, such as: misunderstanding of EU policies, disinformation, and stereotypes. The Network will also empower citizens with the tools necessary to be involved in shaping a more democratic Europe.

Background information:

In general the “Networks of Towns” found in the Programme Europe for Citizens are cooperative projects that facilitate direct contact between local and regional entities in the EU and its neighbouring countries. These networks enable the organization of events where representatives can meet, discuss, and find solutions to common problems (more: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/europe-for-citizens_en/)

„ENSuRe“ project will foster European citizenship and democratic participation by making the Union’s policy more understandable and relevant to local territories. In a time where confidence in EU decision making is at an all time low, and where support from rural communities is rapidly declining, this project aims to build European solidarity by giving its people a unique opportunity to meet, discuss, plan and implement initiatives lead by citizens and experts from rural areas in 11 different countries.

Project Leader – the Regional Information Centre (RIC) Slovenska Bistrica

RIC Slovenska Bistrica is a development-supporting institution whose primary purpose is to promote the development of entrepreneurship, economics and tourism in the region. We are active in the field of business development, local and regional development, tourism and rural development. RIC has managed several projects related to local self-sufficiency. In 2015 we achieved 30% growth in the marketing of local products and implemented the locally produced food in schools in our area, which indicates that we are on the right track.

Project framework:

The project duration is 24 months from February 2017. It will consist of five transnational events organized by different partners between March 2017 and October 2018. Each event will gather foreign participants representing all project partners, as well as local citizens. The events will be followed by information and dissemination events on each partners’ territory.

Project events will be dedicated to the following topics:

- agricultural policy and the citizens' perception of the EU on rural areas
- finding common solutions for promoting local development
- food security
- cross-border mobility of workers involved in agriculture
- tools to address crisis management in agriculture policy
- local action groups and Rural Development organisations having an EU perspective
- community-led local development, interaction with the community, local action groups
- the macro and micro economic impact of the TIPP (facts and myths)
- the decline of support of the EU integration process on rural areas.

Preliminary schedule	Each partner is able to send 3 participants to each of the events, beside the first event in Bistrica where 2 persons are expected. 1. Starting event – an organizational event and a study visit Participants: 51-75 (20 foreign) Venue: Slovenska Bistrica Date: March 2017 2. A conference with expert panels, debates and workshops Participants: 101-125 (35 foreign) Venue: <i>to be confirmed</i> Budget for hosting this event: around 20.000 euro 3. A conference with expert panels, debates and workshops. Participants: 101-125 (35 foreign) Venue: <i>to be confirmed</i> Budget for hosting this event: around 20.000 euro 4. A conference with expert panels, debates and workshops. Participants: 126-150 (45 foreign) Venue: Slovenska Bistrica 5. Closing event: a conference with expert panels, debates and workshops. Participants: 101-125 (35 foreign) Venue: <i>to be confirmed</i> Budget for hosting this event: around 20.000 euro
The budget	The project will finance: - The organisation of 5 transnational events - Practical arrangements during the events – participants' accommodation, food, local transport; as well as external experts, venue, materials - Project communication tools and social media - Promotional materials - Coordination costs of the Leader - Partners' travel costs – up to 100 euro per person per event. Each partner will take part in each of the 5 events with 3 participants (only in the first event – with 2), getting a reimbursement up to 100 EUR per

	person/per travel to minimize their costs. Partner's input: - In-kind – staff involvement - In-kind – use of dissemination channels - In case your travel expenses exceed 100 euro per person per event, you will be asked to cover only the missing part.
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Interested to join the Network?

RIC Slovenska Bistrica is going to apply for funds for this project to the European Commission on behalf of the whole partners' group before September 1st 2016.

Please confirm your interest to join the project **by Tuesday 21 June 2016**. How can you confirm your interest? Please provide us with the attached Word file called „Partner Identification Form“. Please send it to Gosia Wochowska - malgorzata.wochowska@gmail.com , keeping in copy Mr. Tomaz Pristovnik tomaz.pristovnik@ric-sb.si

In case of any questions about the Europe for Citizens Program, the action „Network of Towns“, or this specific project, please do not hesitate to contact us and ask for details.