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PROGRAMME INTERREG ITALY-CROATIA 2021 – 2027

**DEMY-Coop
DEcision-Making Youth for
cross-border Cooperation**

**Deliverable D 1.3.1 Identification of
procedures for youth engagement**

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IDENTIFICATION OF PROCEDURES FOR YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Deliverable D. 1.3.1

This document is a preliminary assessment of the regulations promoting youth organisations in Europe and in the Interreg Italy-Croatia cooperation area. Its main goal is to underline the importance of the youth and their role in the society, through a shared definition and guidelines that can be freely applied at all levels (EU and cross-border, national and local, macroregional).

The document collects information about best practices of youth development, empowerment and cooperation, by identifying some youth organisations and highlighting their activities, priorities and work. The document also includes a quite extensive mapping of the youth organisations that operate across the cooperation area.

This document is a preparatory work to be used as a basis for further action within the DEMY-Coop project, where youth organisations, identified and selected in collaboration with local authorities in the areas covered by the project, will be involved in local meetings and will be led to explore their views, needs and challenges with regard to a more inclusive, meaningful and effective engagement of youth in strategic decision-making.





Italy – Croatia



Index

1. Introduction	p. 3
2. Youth engagement in the EUSAIR through territorial cooperation best practices	p. 4
3. Good Practices from Cities: Examples of Youth Engagement	p. 8
4. Youth engagement in Italy	p. 10
5. Youth engagement in Croatia	p. 14
6. Procedures for youth engagement	p. 18



1. Introduction

Decision-Making Youth for CB Cooperation (DEMY-Coop) is included in the small-scale project co-financed by the cross-border Interreg Italy-Croatia 2021-2027 Program. It contributes to Program Priority 5 “Integrated Governance for Stronger Cooperation,” specifically to the Objective 5.1 “Other Actions in Support of Improved Cooperation Governance”.

Based on the results of the previous [AI-NURECC PLUS](#) project, ended in December 2023, which helped support a stronger involvement of youth in a cross-border cooperation of the Adriatic Ionian Region and in relation to the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR), DEMY-Coop aims at stimulating local and regional government bodies to recognize youth as potential stakeholders and activate legal and administrative processes to involve them more meaningfully in macro-regional policies.

The project investigates the administrative and legal obstacles that hinder youth engagement in strategic decision-making and the goal of such investigation is to identify a model to enhance the institutional capacities of public bodies (for local and regional authorities) and stakeholders (youth organisations) in finding paths of collaboration and together work towards a smoother, more sustainable and inclusive cooperation.

To do so, DEMY-Coop devises activities to raise awareness, engage and integrate Local or Regional Authorities (LARs) and youth organizations by promoting the benefits of common cooperation. Therefore, the main focus is the inclusion of young people and their involvement in strategic decision-making processes, seeking to address their lack of participation and involvement in strategic decision-making processes, with the aim of improving integrated governance and cross-border cooperation in the Programme area. The intent is to promote and trigger cooperation.

The following sections provide an account of the procedures and mechanisms for youth engagement in the cross-border cooperation logic and specifically in the EUSAIR, as well as of present youth engagement good practices. Also, they include a synthesis of the results obtained by the project partners in their dialogue with both local authorities and youth organisations.



Italy – Croatia



2. Youth engagement in the EUSAIR through territorial cooperation best practices.

The European Union Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR) represents a long-term strategic policy framework with two broad aims: to promote socio-economic development and social cohesion among its participating countries from the EU and the Western Balkan region, while serving as a mechanism to help drive the EU enlargement and integration process (European Parliament, 2018). Adopted by the European Council on 29 September 2014, it is one of the four EU macroregional strategies.

The EUSAIR is participated by ten countries of the Adriatic Ionian area: Croatia, Greece, Italy and Slovenia for the EU part; Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, North Macedonia for the WB part; and San Marino.

The Strategy is hence a matter of governance structures, cooperation and coordination. As is the case with other macro-regional strategies, the strategy's implementation is framed around the "3 No's": no new institutions, no new EU funding, and no new regulations.

Participating countries govern the Strategy through multi-level governance mechanisms and directly related implementation tools, coordinate their policies and strategic investment plans at national, trans-national and multi-level, and cooperate through programmes and strategic projects dealing within the scope of five common challenges (Thematic Pillars): Blue Growth, Connecting the Region (transport and energy), Environmental Quality, Sustainable Tourism, Improved Social Cohesion. Each pillar is coordinated by one EU and one non-EU member country. Capacity building in all areas and at all levels, research and innovation and SME development run through all pillars as cross-cutting themes.

The governance structure and the implementation of EUSAIR is organised in a complex multi-level governance system, given that each participating country has a unique institutional and administrative setting. This said, a general coordination structure is there, fundamentally based on three levels:

- the political level, consisting of line Ministers for EU Funds or for Foreign Affairs and implementing bodies setting strategic objectives;
- the operational level dealt with by the governing board as the interface between the political level of National Coordinators who ensure the decision-making is dealt with and the operational level of Pillar Coordinators spearheading each thematic pillar, where perform coordination tasks through the rotating Presidency and the Trio Presidency;
- the implementation level with Pillar Coordinators and the Thematic Steering Group representatives (TSGs) from the relevant line ministries being responsible for providing technical expertise in identifying key processes to implement the pillars and to matchmake with available funds; the Facility Point providing operational and administrative support to the key governance actors.



Italy – Croatia



While the strategy is governed at national and supranational level, the actual implementation occurs at the regional and local levels. Subnational stakeholders, civil society and private actors are key contributors in identifying priorities and developing innovative projects to implement EUSAIR objectives at territorial level.

In this framework, the collaboration with subnational actors has become very intensive, especially in the last couple of years and with particular reference to youth engagement in the strategy. Some EUSAIR stakeholders have become important, among them the Adriatic Ionian Euroregion (AIE or Euroregion).

The Euroregion is an international organisation which focuses its attention on monitoring the progress of the EUSAIR and on supporting the implementation of its objectives and thematic pillars at local and regional level, taking part in transnational cooperation activities, strategies and projects in collaboration with the key EUSAIR institutions, organisations and implementers: the European Commission (DG REGIO), the Adriatic Ionian Fora, the Adriatic Ionian Initiative (AII). In the last years, the AIE established close cooperation with the EUSAIR political and technical structures with a view to better promote the capitalisation of the EUSAIR objectives and opportunities across younger generations, while supporting youth engagement in the revision process of the Strategy.

The Euroregion is particularly active in favouring the appropriation of EUSAIR objectives and priorities on part of young local and regional public authorities by activating youth participation and engagement in the strategy through local and regional authorities, as the government bodies closest to the young people. They can ensure youth participation in the strategy and that young people learn about the opportunities linked to it, while acquiring practice and awareness on how to influence and shape decisions and actions.

With the AI-NURECC PLUS initiative, the Euroregion, in collaboration with other networks in the Adriatic Ionian area, has worked to stimulate the participation of Adriatic Ionian young people understating and awareness of the decision-making processes underlying the EUSAIR and the growing role youth are allowed to have in it. Based on the AI-NURECC PLUS results, the Euroregion supported the DEMY-Coop Consortium in the application and implementation of the project.

Between 2021 and 2023, the AI-NURECC PLUS has implemented an extensive youth engagement action with a view to support young people's understanding of and participation in the EUSAIR, while sustainably providing them with opportunities to connect across the region, and to discuss how their perspectives could be embedded in EUSAIR priorities, to meet EU and EUSAIR stakeholders.

The scope of the action has included activities in EUSAIR cross-pillars (Research and Innovation, SMEs Development, and Skills Development) and thematic attention to EUSAIR-relevant topics (Sustainable Tourism, Cultural and Creative Industries, and Circular Economy).



Italy – Croatia



Youth-centred activities implemented include:

- A Summer School on Sustainable Tourism in September 2022, attended by 33 AI graduates, with a winning team presenting their project idea at the TSG4 on Sustainable Tourism in October 2022.
- Student mobility for 11 interns in local and regional authorities of the region as well as in Bruxelles, in autumn 2023.
- Three events on youth skills for youth: two-youth led events one in Skopje in January 2023 and one in Sarajevo in May 2023, and a conference on blue skills in San Marino in November 2023.
- Focus on gender equality and social topics by participating in the Strong Women Conference of July 2023 with an AI-NURECC/AIYN panel and by organising an event on Women Entrepreneurship, in Budva, in October 2023.
- Two youth-led networking events focusing on the contribution of AIYN to EUSAIR processes: the Action Plan revision and the Youth Council consultations.
- Four editions of the Adriatic Ionian Youth Organisations Forum (AIYOF), two of which held in conjunction with the AI/EUSAIR Annual Fora (in May 2022 and 2023).

Under AI-NURECC PLUS, the Euroregion's main achievement was the creation of the Adriatic Ionian Youth Network (AIYN), an open, cross-border youth network, committed to ensure deep and broad territorial coverage of the EUSAIR, to stimulate youth appropriation of its goals and opportunities and to propose, structure, design and implement youth-led engagement, advocacy, awareness raising and capacity building actions, also in connection with peers from the other EU Macroregions.

The AIYN is a growingly pivotal actor of AIE's youth-focused action, helping the Association in gathering and accumulating knowledge about youth needs and expectations as well as in facilitating youth cooperation. Its members are consulted as Junior Experts on EUSAIR-related topics such as Sustainable Tourism, Cultural and Creative Industries, Circular Economy, Social Digital Innovation and Communication.

During the AI-NURECC PLUS Final Conference held on 30 November 2023 in Brussels, the AIYN launched ideas for a new course of youth engagement in the EUSAIR:

- The need to develop tools, practices and activities for achieving a better knowledge/experience of macroregional processes;
- The importance of supporting processes to broaden the scope and outreach of macroregional-wide youth engagement actions to marginalized youth e.g. by creating and implementing a youth-led awareness campaign across the region;
- The willingness and availability of youth to bring engagement to the next step and participate in programme design, monitoring and evaluation.



Italy – Croatia



Based on these results, the AIYN set new operational goals to corroborate youth engagement process at EUSAI level. This goal became a commitment in the course of 2024, when, steered by the Croatian EUSAIR Presidency, a youth consultation roadmap took place with young people aged between 16-29 and resident in one of the ten EUSAIR participating countries as well as EUSAIR stakeholders implementing youth projects were the target.

A Task Force on youth was established to conduct a consultation process based on both open and closed phases, taking place from September 22nd to November 6th, 2023. The open process invited all young people aged 16-29 within EUSAIR participating countries/territories to share their opinions through a comprehensive survey. The closed process targeted youth stakeholders, including national authorities responsible for youth policies, youth organizations, and student associations. These stakeholders will also provide valuable insights through the same survey.

The surveys were developed by youth policy experts in collaboration with the EUSAIR Facility Point, and aimed at collecting opinions of young people on the role, scope, and representation profile and mandate of a possible EUSAIR Youth Council. To ensure informed choices, participants were given access to three e-learning modules on EU Youth Dialogue, EU Macro-Regional Strategies, and EUSAIR youth projects/initiatives, to be completed before taking the survey. Based on the consultation results, the Youth Consultation Task Force, with the assistance of the EUSAIR Facility Point, developed a proposal for the EUSAIR Youth Council, to be presented to the EUSAIR Governing Board for adoption.

In parallel, the process foresaw the launch of a Call for Applications for the EUSAIR Youth Council (EYC), which launched and closed on 27 May 2024 with 185 applications from across the Adriatic Ionian region.

The EYC will be officially presented in Autumn 2024 by the current Hellenic Presidency of the EUSAIR, in cooperation with the former Croatian Presidency.



3. Good Practices from Cities: Examples of Youth Engagement

Several cities in Italy and Croatia have developed innovative practices for youth engagement, particularly in the context of governance and public participation. These initiatives serve as valuable examples for fostering cross-border cooperation and involving young people in decision-making processes.

The Pact of Subsidiarity in Verona: The Pact of Subsidiarity is an innovative approach to governance that involves collaboration between active citizens and local authorities in the city of Verona, Italy. The pact allows citizens, including young people, to participate in the management of public resources and the development of policies that benefit the common good. The Pact of Subsidiarity covers various thematic areas, including sports, culture, and social issues, and involves the management of public spaces and buildings for projects that serve the public interest and uphold the principles of inclusivity and participation. This practice is particularly relevant to cross-border cooperation, as it demonstrates how local authorities can create mechanisms for citizen engagement that are responsive to the needs and priorities of the community.

Active Citizenship for the Common Good in Padua: In the Veneto region, the city of Padua has implemented the "Active Citizenship for the Common Good" initiative, a framework designed to foster collaboration between the local government and its citizens, including young people, in the care, regeneration, and shared management of common goods. Approved by the city council, this regulation allows individuals and groups—whether formal or informal, including schools and non-profit enterprises—to propose interventions aimed at managing and improving public assets in the interest of the community. These interventions can range from minor, occasional activities like cleaning, painting, or gardening, to more complex, medium- and long-term projects. Citizens can engage through "Collaboration Pacts," which outline the terms and responsibilities of the partnership between the city and its citizens, ensuring that everyone involved has a clear understanding of their roles in the project. This initiative not only enhances the community's involvement in local governance but also encourages young people to take an active role in the stewardship of their environment, fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility towards public resources.



Italy – Croatia



Youth Participation in Padua: Complementing the "Active Citizenship for the Common Good" initiative, Padua has also developed a comprehensive youth participation strategy that includes the establishment of a Youth Council and the implementation of participatory budgeting. The Youth Council in Padua serves as an advisory body to the local government, providing young people with a platform to voice their opinions and contribute to policy-making. Additionally, the city has introduced participatory budgeting processes that allow young people to have a direct say in the allocation of public funds for projects that benefit their communities. This approach ensures that youth engagement is not only consultative but also impactful, with tangible outcomes that reflect the priorities and needs of young people.

The City of Rijeka's Youth Program: In Croatia, the city of Rijeka has been recognized for its innovative approach to youth engagement through the implementation of the "Rijeka Youth Program." This program focuses on creating opportunities for young people to participate in cultural, social, and political activities, with a strong emphasis on inclusion and diversity. The program includes initiatives such as youth-led cultural projects, workshops on civic engagement, and the establishment of youth spaces where young people can gather, collaborate, and develop their ideas. Rijeka's commitment to youth participation has not only empowered young people but has also enriched the city's cultural and social landscape, making it a model for other cities in the region.

These examples from Verona, Padua, and Rijeka demonstrate how cities can effectively engage young people in governance and public participation. By creating inclusive and participatory mechanisms, these cities have empowered young people to take an active role in shaping their communities, setting a precedent for cross-border cooperation and youth engagement in the Italy-Croatia region.



4. Youth engagement in Italy

On 28 July, an important meeting took place between youth associations and representatives of local authorities from the cross-border area of Italy and Croatia. This event, organized as part of the DEMY COPP project, was designed to foster dialogue and collaboration between these key stakeholders, with the ultimate goal of developing a cross-border participatory governance model. This model aims to ensure that young people, through their associations, are actively involved in the co-design and co-creation of solutions related to youth-oriented and youth-centered policies, particularly within the context of EU cohesion policies.

Event Overview

The event kicked off with an introduction to the concept of governance and, more specifically, shared governance. These foundational discussions were critical in setting the stage for the more targeted dialogues that followed. Representatives from sports associations, dance schools, civic engagement organizations, and recreational groups were all present, providing a diverse array of perspectives on what governance should look like when it comes to youth participation.

Defining Governance and Shared Governance

To ensure a common understanding, two working definitions were proposed during the event:

- a. **Governance:** Governance was broadly defined as the structures and processes that are designed to ensure accountability, transparency, responsiveness, rule of law, stability, equity, and inclusiveness in the exercise of power, particularly in the management of public affairs.
- b. **Shared Governance:** Shared governance was defined as a collaborative approach to governance that involves multiple stakeholders in the decision-making process.

This model emphasizes the distribution of decision-making power across different groups, ensuring that those affected by policies have a say in their formulation and implementation.



Italy – Croatia



Exploring the Cross-Border Governance Model

One of the central hypotheses formulated by the participants was the potential for a cross-border governance model that is not just participatory but also deeply integrated, allowing for seamless collaboration between youth organizations and local authorities across the Italy-Croatia border. This model would be built on the principles of inclusivity, mutual respect, and continuous engagement. The idea is to create a governance structure that not only involves youth in policy-making processes but also empowers them to take an active role in shaping the future of their communities.

Addressing Logistical, Linguistic, and Organizational Challenges

The participants also acknowledged several challenges that could hinder the implementation of such a governance model.

- **Logistical Challenges:** One of the major obstacles identified was the lack of efficient and sustainable transportation links between Italy and Croatia. The absence of direct flights, limited maritime connections, and the lack of a train system were all highlighted as significant barriers that could impede regular, face-to-face interactions between stakeholders. To foster true cross-border collaboration, it was suggested that efforts should be made to improve these transportation links, making it easier for young people and local authorities to meet and work together.
- **Linguistic Challenges:** Language differences were another challenge discussed during the event. While English was identified as a common language that could be used to facilitate communication, participants also recognized that this could present both an obstacle and an opportunity. The use of English could serve as a valuable learning experience, helping participants improve their language skills and fostering a sense of shared European identity. However, ensuring that all participants have a sufficient level of English proficiency would be crucial to the success of this approach.
- **Cultural Challenges:** Cultural differences were also noted as a potential obstacle. Participants from both sides of the border emphasized the importance of understanding and valuing these differences, rather than seeing them as barriers. The diversity of experiences and cultural backgrounds could enrich the governance process, making it more inclusive and representative of the varied communities involved.



Italy – Croatia



The Role of Youth Associations in Cross-Border Governance

The event also highlighted the unique role that youth associations can play in this cross-border governance model. These organizations, which include sports clubs, cultural associations, and recreational groups, bring with them a wealth of experience and knowledge that is crucial for the development of effective and inclusive policies.

Youth associations are not just service providers or interest groups; they are also platforms for civic engagement and democratic participation. By involving these organizations in the governance process, local authorities can tap into the energy, creativity, and passion of young people, ensuring that the policies they create are responsive to the needs and aspirations of the younger generation.

Good Practices in Shared Governance

To provide concrete examples of how shared governance can be implemented, the event featured discussions on several good practices from across Europe. One of the key examples discussed was the [Pact of Subsidiarity](#) implemented by the Municipality of Verona. This initiative is a collaboration between active citizens and the local government, aimed at developing actions, skills, and ideas that benefit the common good of the city. The pacts cover various thematic areas, including sports, culture, and social issues, and involve the management of public spaces and buildings for projects that serve the public interest and uphold the principles of inclusivity and participation.

This example was particularly relevant to the discussions at the event, as it demonstrated how local authorities and citizens can work together to manage public resources and develop policies that reflect the needs and desires of the community. The Verona experience showed that shared governance is not just a theoretical concept but a practical approach that can be applied to various contexts, including the cross-border area between Italy and Croatia.



Italy – Croatia



Challenges and Opportunities

Building on the discussions of governance and shared governance, the participants explored the specific challenges and opportunities related to creating a cross-border governance model between Italy and Croatia.

Key Challenges Identified:

- **Logistics:** As mentioned earlier, the lack of direct transportation links between the two countries is a significant challenge. Overcoming this would require coordinated efforts at both the local and national levels to improve infrastructure and make travel between Italy and Croatia more accessible and sustainable.
- **Language Barriers:** While English can be a common language, ensuring that all participants are comfortable using it is essential. This may require additional language support or training for some participants.
- **Cultural Differences:** While cultural diversity can enrich the governance process, it can also lead to misunderstandings or conflicts if not properly managed. Efforts should be made to promote cultural exchange and mutual understanding among participants.

Opportunities:

- **Enhancing Cooperation:** The cross-border governance model offers a unique opportunity to enhance cooperation between Italy and Croatia, particularly in the areas of youth participation, cultural exchange, and social inclusion. By working together, youth associations and local authorities can develop innovative solutions to common challenges and create a stronger, more connected cross-border region.
- **Fostering European Identity:** The process of creating a cross-border governance model can also help to foster a sense of European identity among young people. By engaging in collaborative efforts that transcend national borders, participants can develop a greater appreciation for the values of cooperation, diversity, and unity that are at the heart of the European Union.



Italy – Croatia



Structuring a Cooperative Model of Governance

Drawing on the inputs from the various discussions, the participants proposed a cooperative model of governance that could serve as the foundation for cross-border collaboration between youth associations and local authorities. This model is based on the following principles:

- **Inclusivity:** Ensuring that all youth voices are heard, regardless of their background or the type of association they belong to. This includes sports clubs, cultural associations, and other youth organizations.
- **Continuous Engagement:** Establishing structures for ongoing engagement, such as youth councils and local councils, that provide a platform for democratic debate and decision-making. These structures should be designed to allow for continuous feedback, ensuring that the governance process is dynamic and responsive to the needs of young people.
- **Collaboration:** Encouraging collaboration between youth associations, local authorities, schools, and other stakeholders. This collaboration should be based on mutual respect and a shared commitment to creating positive change in the community.
- **Capacity Building:** Providing opportunities for youth associations to develop their capacity for strategic decision-making and engagement in governance processes. This could include training on how government structures work, as well as support in accessing resources and funding.

5. Youth engagement in Croatia

During the meetings organised by Emedea in June 2024 with local authorities and representatives of youth organisations in Šibenik-Knin County, the needs of young people at regional and local levels were identified, as well as the challenges in cooperation and more active engagement in decision-making processes at the local level. Additionally, procedures and mechanisms for youth engagement were identified.

One of the existing procedures for youth engagement at the local level is the procedure prescribed by the [Youth Councils Act](#), which outlines the specific requirements that local government units must adhere to when involving young people in city and municipal councils.



Italy – Croatia



According to this procedure, the Youth Councils Act mandates that local authorities establish youth councils that represent the interests of young people in decision-making processes. These councils are required to be regularly consulted on matters affecting youth, ensuring that young people have a formal and consistent platform for their voices to be heard. The procedure also requires local authorities to provide ongoing support, including training and resources, to empower youth representatives in their roles.

The procedure for engaging young people at the local level in municipalities and small towns with populations up to 10,000 involves several key steps. First, the local representative body establishes a youth council as an advisory body to advocate for the rights and interests of young people. The election process begins with a public call for candidate nominations, which can be submitted by youth-focused organisations, including informal groups of young people (at least 5 members for municipalities up to 5,000 inhabitants, and at least 10 for those between 5,001 and 10,000 inhabitants). This call, detailing the procedure, criteria, and deadlines, is published on the local government's website or official gazette and sent to relevant youth organizations and schools. A designated working body then verifies the nominations, and the local representative body selects the youth council members. This process ensures that young people are actively involved in local public decision-making.

Members of youth councils in municipalities and small towns are then invited to engage in various issues related to youth rights, needs, and interests at the local level: they have the obligation to actively participate in sessions of the local council or assembly and are also responsible for encouraging active participation of other young people in local government. They also may be invited to attend and contribute to municipal or city council meetings as needed.

In addition to this procedure, which primarily engages individual young people, the meetings also discussed the need to formalise procedures that would allow youth organisations to be directly consulted on specific issues concerning young people.

The following procedures were proposed:

1. **Establishing a Youth Organisations Advisory Board:** This board would consist of representatives from various youth organisations and would be regularly consulted on policy matters affecting young people. The board would provide recommendations and feedback to local authorities, ensuring that the collective voice of youth organisations is considered in decision-making.



Italy – Croatia



2. **Creating a Direct Communication Channel:** A dedicated communication channel (e.g., a digital platform or a regular meeting schedule) would be established to facilitate ongoing dialogue between local authorities and youth organisations. This would allow for real-time consultations on issues as they arise, ensuring that youth organisations are promptly informed and able to contribute to discussions.
3. **Formalising Partnerships with Youth Organisations:** Local authorities would enter into formal partnership agreements with youth organisations, outlining specific areas of collaboration and the roles of each party. These partnerships would include provisions for joint projects, shared resources, and regular monitoring and evaluation of the impact of youth engagement initiatives.
4. **Organising regular Youth Engagement Fora at local and regional level:** These fora would bring together young individuals, youth organisations, and local government representatives to discuss key issues, share ideas, and collaborate on solutions. The forums would be held regularly, ensuring continuous and structured engagement between all stakeholders.

In addition to the above proposed procedures for engaging young people in local government, discussions at Emedea meetings with public authorities also focused on youth involvement in addressing pressing issues such as **sustainable tourism** (through the greening and digitalization of the economy), **youth employment and education** for future jobs, cultural life, and social inclusion during the off-tourist season.

To specifically address the themes of sustainable tourism, greening, technological development, education, employment, and culture, the following tailored procedures for youth engagement in local policy-making were proposed by Emedea and were discussed with local authorities and youth organisations:

1. **Youth-Led Sustainability Task Forces:** Establish task forces within the youth council dedicated to sustainable tourism and greening initiatives. These task forces could collaborate with local businesses, environmental organisations, and tech startups to develop and promote eco-friendly tourism practices. They might also spearhead campaigns for the digital transformation of the local economy, such as the adoption of green technologies in tourism-related businesses.



Italy – Croatia



2. **Green Innovation Hackathons and Workshops:** Organise hackathons and innovation workshops where young people can brainstorm and prototype solutions for sustainable tourism and technological advancements. These events could focus on creating digital tools that help reduce the environmental impact of tourism, such as apps that promote eco-friendly activities or platforms that connect tourists with local green businesses.
3. **Mentorship and Internship Programs for Future Jobs:** Develop mentorship and internship programs that connect young people with professionals in emerging industries, such as green technology, digital tourism, and cultural management. These programs should be designed in partnership with local businesses, educational institutions, and cultural organizations to provide young people with hands-on experience and skills that are in high demand.
4. **Cultural Heritage and Innovation Projects:** Encourage young people to engage in projects that blend cultural heritage with modern technology. For example, youth-led initiatives could focus on creating digital archives or interactive apps that promote local culture and history, while also exploring ways to innovate cultural offerings during the off-season to attract visitors year-round.
5. **Cultural Exchange and Social Inclusion Programs:** Implement cultural exchange programs that allow young people to experience and share different cultural practices, enhancing social inclusion. Additionally, young people could develop offseason cultural events that keep the local community engaged and vibrant, while also fostering a sense of belonging and inclusion among residents.

Building on the analysis of youth engagement processes within local and regional governments, it is evident that there is a mutual need for collaboration, as well as for formalizing this cooperation through the creation of documents that concretize and institutionalize the partnership. These documents would prescribe the timing, frequency, format, and specific themes on which the collaboration should be based. The plan is to hold at least two more meetings before the project's conclusion, with the aim of finalizing a document that outlines concrete steps for ongoing cooperation.



6. Procedures for youth engagement

Effective youth engagement requires the implementation of structured procedures that facilitate the participation of young people in decision-making processes. These procedures should be designed to ensure inclusivity, transparency, and responsiveness, enabling young people to actively contribute to the development and implementation of cross-border cooperation initiatives. The following are key procedures that can be adopted to enhance youth engagement in the Italy-Croatia cross-border region:

Youth Councils: Youth councils are formal bodies that represent the interests of young people at the local, regional, or national level. They provide a platform for young people to voice their opinions, propose ideas, and participate in the decision-making process. In the context of cross-border cooperation, youth councils can play a crucial role in facilitating dialogue between young people from Italy and Croatia, allowing them to collaborate on joint projects, share experiences, and develop a sense of shared identity. Establishing cross-border youth councils can help to institutionalize youth participation in governance and ensure that young people's voices are heard in the formulation and implementation of cross-border policies.

Participatory Budgeting: Participatory budgeting is a process in which citizens, including young people, are involved in deciding how public funds are allocated. This process allows young people to have a direct say in the allocation of resources for projects that affect their communities, such as youth programs, cultural initiatives, and infrastructure development. In the context of cross-border cooperation, participatory budgeting can be used to fund joint projects that address common challenges faced by young people in the Italy-Croatia region. By involving young people in the budgeting process, local authorities can ensure that cross-border cooperation initiatives are responsive to the needs and priorities of young people.

Youth Advisory Committees: Youth advisory committees are groups of young people who provide advice and recommendations to decision-makers on issues that affect them. These committees can be established at the local, regional, or national level and can play a crucial role in shaping policies and programs related to youth engagement in cross-border cooperation. Youth advisory committees can also serve as a bridge between young people and decision-makers, facilitating communication and ensuring that young people's perspectives are taken into account in the decision-making process.





Italy – Croatia



Workshops and Training Programs: Capacity-building workshops and training programs are essential for empowering young people to actively participate in cross-border cooperation initiatives. These programs should focus on developing skills such as leadership, communication, project management, and intercultural competence, which are crucial for effective participation in cross-border cooperation. In addition to technical skills, workshops and training programs should also emphasize the importance of civic engagement, social responsibility, and active citizenship. By providing young people with the knowledge and skills they need to participate in cross-border cooperation, local authorities can help to create a new generation of leaders who are committed to promoting regional integration and sustainable development.

