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EU Law for Funding and Project Design.

A Focus on the Europe for Citizens Programme.

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To my family

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ABSTRACT

Questa tesi nasce dal desiderio di approfondire la conoscenza delle opportunità di finanziamento offerte dall'Unione Europea e di accrescere la consapevolezza del ruolo che i progetti europei transnazionali possono svolgere nel processo di costruzione dal basso di un'Europa più forte, competitiva ed inclusiva. Lo scambio di esperienze, conoscenze e buone pratiche, così come la realizzazione congiunta di studi e ricerche, la sperimentazione di nuove metodologie di lavoro ed il confronto con altre culture rappresentano degli strumenti fondamentali per il rafforzamento dell'Unione e dei suoi Stati Membri, in quanto sono in grado di stimolare la cooperazione e la solidarietà tra professionisti e società civile. La finalità principale perseguita dalla tesi è dunque quella di delineare un quadro generale per orientarsi tra le diverse opportunità di finanziamento offerte dall'Unione Europea allo scopo di realizzare progetti ed iniziative che possano avere un impatto concreto a livello regionale, nazionale ed europeo.

La tesi è suddivisa in tre capitoli. Il primo capitolo analizza la legislazione dell'UE riguardante la gestione delle proprie finanze, risorse destinate al finanziamento di progetti regionali, nazionali o transnazionali che perseguano gli obiettivi e interessi dell'Unione e favoriscano l'implementazione delle politiche europee a sostegno del processo di integrazione e rafforzamento europei. Una buona conoscenza delle politiche europee, della gestione del bilancio e del quadro di programmazione dell'Unione in cui gli strumenti finanziari si inseriscono è essenziale per la stesura di progetti europei ad alto valore aggiunto. Il secondo capitolo descrive le metodologie necessarie per la preparazione e gestione dei progetti europei, ossia il Project Cycle Management e il Logical Framework Approach. Il terzo capitolo è dedicato allo sviluppo di un "case study", incentrato su uno specifico programma di finanziamento: il programma Europa per i Cittadini 2014-2020. Quest'ultimo capitolo sviluppa un'analisi dettagliata di Europa per i Cittadini e degli obiettivi che esso persegue nel campo della cittadinanza europea e della partecipazione democratica e civica ed offre un esempio di proposta progettuale per l'Asse 2 del programma.

Il primo capitolo spiega come le risorse finanziarie europee, destinate alla realizzazione di iniziative e progetti a livello regionale, nazionale ed europeo, vengano gestite dall'Unione Europea, ed in particolare dalla Commissione. La prima tematica affrontata è la gestione del bilancio dell'UE, il cui funzionamento è regolato da una serie di principi stabiliti dal Trattato sul Funzionamento dell'Unione Europea (artt. 310-24) e da ulteriori disposizioni delineate nel Regolamento Finanziario (Regolamento (UE) N. 966/2012). In seguito viene approfondito l'argomento riguardante il "Quadro Finanziario Pluriennale" (*Multiannual Financial Framework*), uno strumento volto a facilitare

l'ordinato andamento delle spese dell'Unione assicurando che esse non eccedano le risorse disponibili. Il Quadro Finanziario stabilisce infatti il massimale degli stanziamenti annuali per tutte le categorie di spesa previste per un arco di tempo pluriennale (generalmente cinque anni, anche se l'attuale QFP copre un arco di sei anni). Successivamente viene chiarito come le risorse finanziarie che compongono il bilancio generale dell'UE, ad eccezione di parte minima destinata alle spese di funzionamento delle istituzioni, siano utilizzate per attuare in concreto gli interessi e le politiche dell'Unione in una vasta gamma di settori, dalla ricerca ed innovazione all'educazione, cultura, sanità pubblica, turismo, energia, reti transeuropee, industria, coesione sociale ed economica, sicurezza e cittadinanza, protezione dell'ambiente, ecc. Le principali finalità perseguite dall'Unione Europea per il periodo 2014-2020 e che hanno ispirato e continueranno ad ispirare i vari programmi di finanziamento fino alla fine del decennio sono sintetizzate all'interno della cosiddetta "Strategia Europa 2020". Pertanto conoscere gli obiettivi che la Strategia si pone permette di comprendere le logiche di fondo e i profili evolutivi delle decisioni comunitarie. Lo scopo essenziale della Strategia Europa 2020 è quello di favorire il rafforzamento di un'Europa che sia più inclusiva, competitiva e sostenibile. Per conferire la maggior concretezza possibile a tale strategia l'UE ha stabilito cinque obiettivi da realizzare entro la fine del decennio, i quali riguardano occupazione, ricerca e sviluppo, cambiamenti climatici e sostenibilità energetica, istruzione e lotta alla povertà e all'emarginazione. Tali obiettivi sono riconducibili a sette iniziative prioritarie, chiamate anche "iniziative faro", che tracciano un quadro entro quale Unione e Stati Membri sostengono reciprocamente i propri sforzi per sostenere una crescita intelligente, sostenibile ed inclusiva. Una volta descritto il funzionamento del bilancio europeo e le priorità che si intendono raggiungere attraverso la spesa delle risorse che lo compongono, il capitolo procede con l'analisi della gestione di tali risorse da parte della Commissione, distinguendo tra gestione diretta e congiunta. Ai sensi dell'Articolo 317(1) TFUE la Commissione è incaricata di dare esecuzione al bilancio dell'Unione, in cooperazione con gli Stati Membri e sulla base alle disposizioni stabilite dal Regolamento Finanziario. Le funzioni di gestione delle spese possono essere svolte dalla Commissione Europea in maniera diretta (*direct management*) o indiretta con il supporto degli Stati Membri (*shared management*). I fondi gestiti direttamente dall'UE sono erogati, nella maggior parte dei casi, sotto forma di sovvenzioni (*grants*) destinate al finanziamento di progetti nell'ambito di programmi europei collegati alle politiche dell'UE. Il capitolo analizza, *in primis*, la procedura di selezione dei progetti a cui vengono accordate le sovvenzioni, la quale prevede la preliminare pubblicazione online di "inviti a presentare proposte" (*calls for proposals*) da parte della Commissione. Le domande di sovvenzione devono essere presentate per iscritto compilando appositi formulari e vengono successivamente valutate dalla Commissione attraverso una procedura ben definita (accertamento dell'idoneità del richiedente, valutazione qualitativa del richiedente e valutazione qualitativa della proposta), con l'intento di

selezionare le proposte in grado di apportare un reale valore aggiunto e rispondere concretamente alle priorità del programma di finanziamento. A conclusione di questa parte del capitolo viene tracciata una panoramica sui principali programmi di finanziamento esistenti per il periodo 2014-2020 (Erasmus+, COSME, Horizon e LIFE) che analizza in dettaglio la loro base giuridica, le finalità perseguite, la dotazione finanziaria e le azioni sovvenzionate. La restante parte del bilancio dell'Unione, circa il 76%, è gestita invece in collaborazione con le amministrazioni nazionali e regionali attraverso cinque fondi strutturali e di investimento: Fondo europeo di sviluppo regionale, Fondo sociale europeo, Fondo di coesione, Fondo europeo agricolo per lo sviluppo rurale e Fondo europeo per gli affari marittimi e la pesca. Tali Fondi perseguono, in linea generale, la politica di coesione territoriale, sociale ed economica al fine di promuovere uno sviluppo armonioso delle regioni europee. Nonostante ciascuno di questi fondi presenti caratteristiche e finalità a se stanti, tutti e cinque contribuiscono complessivamente alla realizzazione di due obiettivi generali della programmazione 2014-2020: investimenti a favore della crescita e dell'occupazione al fine di sostenere, attraverso investimenti e innovazione, la competitività regionale e occupazionale; rafforzamento della cooperazione territoriale europea attraverso lo scambio di conoscenze, esperienze congiunte e buone pratiche.¹ La sezione del capitolo riguardante i fondi strutturali si conclude con l'analisi del *corpus* normativo dei cinque Fondi SIE la cui disciplina regolamentare è raccolta in un regolamento generale (*Common Provisions Regulation*) ed ulteriormente precisata tramite norme specifiche contenute in singoli regolamenti dedicati a ciascuno strumento.

Il secondo capitolo della tesi affronta la tematica della scrittura e gestione di un progetto europeo, dallo sviluppo dell'idea progettuale alla concreta realizzazione delle attività che lo compongono. Il capitolo prende in considerazione le principali metodologie impiegate per la scrittura e la gestione dei progetti europei, focalizzandosi sul Project Cycle Management e sul Logical Framework Approach. Il Project Cycle Management (PCM) fu introdotto dalla Commissione Europea negli anni Novanta con lo scopo iniziale di migliorare la qualità della progettazione e della gestione degli aiuti di sostegno allo sviluppo dei Paesi terzi e solo successivamente iniziò ad essere utilizzato anche per gestione di altri progetti europei. La metodologia del PCM sostiene l'ideazione di progetti ed iniziative che prendano in considerazione i reali problemi di un gruppo di beneficiari e sviluppino un coerente sistema di obiettivi e azioni finalizzate al loro conseguimento, ponendo allo stesso tempo le basi per una buona gestione, un adeguato monitoraggio e una corretta realizzazione delle attività da realizzare. Il PCM è composto da sei fasi progressive: programmazione, identificazione, formulazione, finanziamento, implementazione e valutazione. Durante la fase di programmazione le istituzioni

¹ M. Cappello, *Guida ai fondi strutturali europei 2014-2020: il funzionamento, i soggetti coinvolti, gli obiettivi, il*

europee stabiliscono le linee guida dei programmi di finanziamento, definendo i loro indirizzi di fondo e le finalità principali dei progetti che si andranno a finanziare tramite tali programmi. Con la successiva fase, quella di identificazione, si entra nel cuore dello sviluppo dell'idea progettuale: attraverso studi e consultazioni con beneficiari e parti terze, viene svolta un'analisi dei problemi e bisogni reali di un determinato gruppo di beneficiari per arrivare allo sviluppo di una prima idea, ancora non dettagliata, del progetto che si vorrebbe realizzare. Nella fase di formulazione l'idea progettuale assume una veste definitiva: la proposta formale di finanziamento viene dunque definita nei dettagli e sottoposta alla valutazione dell'ente finanziatore, ossia la Commissione Europea. Per i progetti selezionati segue la fase di finanziamento o "*contracting*", con la relativa negoziazione contrattuale tra ente finanziatore e proponente e con la stipula del contratto di finanziamento, detto *Grant Agreement*. In seguito si giunge alla fase di implementazione che prevede la realizzazione materiale dell'intervento progettuale in piani di azione operativi. Infine vi è la fase di valutazione nella quale si deve rendere conto dell'implementazione generale del progetto, dei suoi risultati e del suo impatto. Lo strumento chiave utilizzato durante il processo di identificazione e implementazione dei progetti è quello dell'approccio del quadro logico (*Logical Framework Approach – LFA*). Il Logical Framework Approach si configura come l'elemento centrale del Project Cycle Management ed è costituito da due fasi, anch'esse progressive: una fase di analisi e un'altra di pianificazione. Nella prima fase la situazione negativa esistente viene analizzata al fine di individuare una situazione futura desiderabile da raggiungere attraverso l'implementazione del progetto. Nella fase di pianificazione l'idea progettuale viene calata nella pratica mediante una serie di passaggi progressivi. La prima fase consiste nell'analisi degli attori coinvolti direttamente o indirettamente nel progetto al fine di chiarire il più possibile la situazione di partenza e la complessa rete di bisogni ed esigenze delle diverse categorie di attori. La fase successiva è l'analisi problemi in cui si analizza la situazione negativa di partenza e si evidenziano le principali problematiche da risolvere inserendole in un apposito diagramma, noto come "albero dei problemi". Dopodiché si arriva all'analisi degli obiettivi che ha come risultato quello di creare un albero speculare a quello problemi che descriva la situazione positiva futura da raggiungere. Segue infine l'analisi delle strategie in cui, tenendo conto della fattibilità degli interventi e dei risultati che si intendono raggiungere, si decidono quali obiettivi includere nel progetto e quali escludere. Una volta selezionata la strategia d'intervento si passa alla fase di pianificazione, la quale prevede la realizzazione del cosiddetto "quadro logico", una vera e propria matrice composta da quattro righe e quattro colonne. Gli elementi essenziali che lo compongono sono i seguenti: nella prima colonna una gerarchia di obiettivi volti a definire la logica di intervento che si intende perseguire, nella quarta colonna i fattori esterni che possono influenzare le attività del progetto o il conseguimento degli obiettivi e nella seconda e terza colonna gli indicatori e le fonti di verifica utili per il monitoraggio e la valutazione delle attività e degli obiettivi. L'ultimo

strumento analizzato nel capitolo è il *Work Package*, utilizzato per la definizione ed organizzazione delle attività del progetto da realizzare. Ciascun Work Package si focalizza su un'attività specifica che a sua volta viene scissa in diversi compiti da svolgere di cui vengono elencati i relativi costi, la data di inizio e fine ed i risultati attesi. I Work Packages sono dunque delle vere e proprie strutture logiche che si possono sviluppare per arrivare ad una più dettagliata analisi dei costi/benefici delle singole azioni e per permettere una valutazione ed un controllo più puntuali. In conclusione, le metodologie descritte in questo secondo capitolo della tesi sostengono la creazione di progetti che siano strettamente connessi alle politiche comunitarie e nazionali e agli obiettivi del programma di riferimento e che, al tempo stesso, si rivelino fattibili e sostenibili, ovvero che si pongano obiettivi concreti e producano risultati sostenibili.

Nel terzo capitolo della tesi viene proposto un case study incentrato su uno specifico programma europeo di finanziamento: Europa per i Cittadini 2014-2020. Nell'attuale momento storico, in cui l'Unione Europea è chiamata ad affrontare alcune questioni cruciali, dalla crescita economica e occupazionale alla gestione dei flussi migratori, è fondamentale che i cittadini prendano parte diretta alle discussioni e diano il loro contributo all'elaborazione delle politiche europee. Nella convinzione che la cittadinanza europea sia un elemento importante ai fini del rafforzamento e della salvaguardia del processo d'integrazione europea, l'impegno dei cittadini europei dovrebbe essere incoraggiato in tutti gli aspetti di vita comunitaria. Le disposizioni riguardanti la cittadinanza europea introdotte dal Trattato di Lisbona hanno infatti cercato di rafforzare il coinvolgimento democratico e civico dei cittadini all'interno dell'Unione, chiamandoli, in particolare attraverso le disposizioni stabilite dall'art. 11 TUE, a partecipare direttamente al processo di elaborazione politica dell'Unione. In tale contesto si inserisce il programma "Europa per i cittadini", implementato dall'UE per la prima volta tra il 2007 e il 2013 e adottato nuovamente per il periodo 2014-2020. Il programma prevede il finanziamento di iniziative transnazionali che promuovano la storia e i valori comuni dell'Europa ed incoraggino la partecipazione democratica e civica, l'impegno sociale ed interculturale o iniziative di volontariato a livello europeo. Gli obiettivi specifici perseguiti dal programma sono i seguenti: sensibilizzare alla memoria, alla storia e ai valori comuni dell'Unione ed incoraggiare la partecipazione democratica e civica dei cittadini europei, permettendo loro di comprendere meglio il funzionamento dell'Unione e il significato di cittadinanza europea. La prima sezione del capitolo si concentra sulla definizione della nozione di cittadinanza europea: vengono analizzate le principali disposizioni contenute all'interno dei Trattati (artt. 9-11 TUE e artt. 20-5 TFUE) e quelle riguardanti la libertà di circolazione e di soggiorno all'interno degli Stati Membri stabilite dalla Direttiva 2004/38/CE. La seconda sezione del capitolo analizza in dettaglio il programma Europa per i cittadini, identificando le sue caratteristiche principali e i documenti ad esso associati da tenere in considerazione nel caso di un'eventuale presentazione di richiesta di sovvenzione. I documenti maggiormente rilevanti sono il Regolamento

che istituisce il programma, la Guida al Programma che fornisce informazioni generali riguardanti la sua struttura, le finalità perseguite e il processo di selezione e valutazione della Commissione ed infine il Work Programme per l'anno corrente che stabilisce le priorità del programma per l'anno 2015. Oltre ai documenti vengono descritte dettagliatamente le diverse azioni sovvenzionate nell'ambito di Europa per i Cittadini. Esso si compone di due "assi": l'Asse 1 "Memoria europea" il cui obiettivo è sensibilizzare alla memoria, alla storia e ai valori comuni dell'Unione e l'Asse 2 "Impegno democratico e partecipazione civica", comprendente al suo interno tre ulteriori misure (gemellaggi di città reti tra città progetti della società civile), il cui scopo è incoraggiare la partecipazione democratica e civica dei cittadini a livello europeo. Infine, nella terza ed ultima parte del capitolo è stato riportato e completato il formulario riguardante la misura "Progetti della società civile" – Asse 2. La proposta progettuale ideata si concentra su un gruppo di destinatari ben definito, giovani europei tra i 15 e i 20 anni, e coinvolge un partenariato transnazionale composto da organizzazioni (scuole secondarie, ONG e organizzazioni no profit) provenienti da undici paesi differenti, tra cui due non ancora Membri dell'UE (Serbia e Montenegro). L'obiettivo principale del progetto è quello di incoraggiare i giovani partecipanti a riflettere in maniera critica sul significato di cittadinanza europea prendendo parte ad attività non convenzionali, pensate appositamente per stimolare il dibattito e la riflessione attraverso l'uso delle tecnologie dell'informazione e della comunicazione.

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this dissertation is to investigate the financial opportunities offered by the European Union and to increase awareness of the role that EU transnational projects play in the bottom-up process of construction of the Union. The exchange of best practices, knowledge and experiences, as well as multicultural exchanges and transnational cooperation, represent key elements in the strengthening of the EU and its Member States. Thus, the primary purpose of this dissertation is to provide a theoretical and practical overview of the financing opportunities offered by the Union for the implementation of regional, national and transnational projects. Besides the direct actions undertaken in a broad range of fields and sectors, the Union implements a bottom-up strategy that should support European excellences and encourage specialists and private or public entities of all the Member States to co-operate with the EU institutions in an effort to overcome a series of current problems or simply to suggest a set of possible solutions. With these aims in mind, a number of funding programmes have been established so as to finance projects able to offer concrete and effective solutions to present problems and difficulties and able to create an added value for the implementation of EU major policies and interests. In the light of this, it is fundamental not only to have in mind what the major funding programmes are, but to get to know the key methods and techniques for drafting EU projects and have a general knowledge of the Union main provisions concerning the budget, funding and policies. For this reason, the dissertation is organised in three chapters: the first one concerning EU law for funding, the second one analysing the methodologies to be used for the drafting and management of projects and the third one devoted to the development of a case study based on a specific EU funding programme, Europe for Citizens 2014-2020.

Chapter I examines the key provisions related to the management and allocation of EU funds, focusing in particular on how the EU budget works and allocates the available financial resources within the Union territory and what goals and objectives are pursued through the spending of these resources. In order to tackle the issue of project management and design an effective understanding of EU policies and of the management of EU funds is essential. The Chapter is divided in three macro-paragraphs: the first focuses on the Commission's powers of executing the budget and managing EU programmes, the second focuses on the Structural Funds and the third on EU direct funding. Among its powers the European Commission performs the tasks of budget execution and programme management. On one hand the institution manages funding programmes, which are financial instruments aimed at strengthening Union efforts in a broad range of sectors, on the other hand it is in charge of the execution of the EU budget in cooperation with Member States and in accordance

with the principles of 'sound financial management', which ensure that EU funds are spent properly. The EU budget is regulated by the provisions laid down in the Treaties (Articles 310-324 TFEU) and in the Financial Regulation. According to those provisions the Commission has the ultimate political responsibility of managing and allocating EU funds, assuring at the same time that resources are spent in a transparent and legal manner. Funds can be managed by the Commission through a system of direct or shared management. In the first case, the financial resources are managed directly by the EU, and, thus, delivered in the form of grants or contracts, while in the second case the management is shared and delegated to EU countries with the surveillance of the Commission. The dissertation examines in detail these two forms of management. On one hand, funds under shared management are known as 'structural funds' and managed through five Funds, the 'Structural and Investment Funds', whose aim is to implement the Europe 2020 Strategy and to promote social and economic cohesion within the territories of Member States. Each of these five Structural Funds has its own features, which will be analysed in the chapter, but what they all have in common is that they seek to create the conditions for the sustainable development of regions, based on an equal distribution of resources. On the other hand, direct management involves direct financial contributions, made by the Commission, in the form of grants in support of projects which further Union interests and contribute to the implementation of specific funding programmes. Over the years the Union has adopted a bottom-up approach which aims at putting together the efforts of EU institutions with the ones of Member States' public and private organisations to realise, through EU direct funding, transnational projects and initiatives suggesting a set of solutions and instruments for the enhancement of a competitive and inclusive Europe. Then, the dissertation explains how to apply for direct funding and what steps need to be taken. First, a partnership with smart and innovative ideas involving a group of organisations working in the same field needs to be established. Second, applicants must choose the most appropriate call for proposals, published on the website of the EU institutions and providing relevant information on the identified funding programme and its participation rules. Then, once the call has been selected, applicants must complete and submit all the documents requested by the Commission. The Chapter concludes with a focus on the EU main funding programmes, notably Erasmus+, Horizon 2020, COSME and LIFE, analysing their legal basis, their key features, the actions they fund and the objectives they pursue.

Chapter II investigates the issue of EU Project Development and Management. The term relates to all those activities required for the drafting and management of European projects, meaning those project proposals addressed to the European Commission in response to the calls for proposals that it publishes on an on-going basis. The Chapter analyses the Project Cycle Management (PCM) and Logical Framework Approach (LFA) methodologies, consisting of progressive actions to be undertaken in order to transform simple ideas into concrete and feasible projects. PCM and the LFA

are design and management tools implemented for the development of projects that shall be: consistent with the priorities of the selected funding programme and with EU policies and/or national policies; feasible, in the sense that the objectives they pursue must be realistic and concretely achievable; sustainable, in the sense that they shall produce sustainable results. Project Cycle Management (PCM) was officially adopted by the European Commission at the beginning of the twentieth century, with the aim of increasing the quality of project proposals and, consequently, the effectiveness of EU development policies. In order to support project design, management and control, this methodology involves a sequence of progressive phases (Programming, Identification, Formulation, Financing, Implementation, Evaluation) covering the whole life-cycle of projects. In particular, during the identification and formulation phases PCM implements the Logical Framework Approach as a means to support effective project design. The LFA involves two further levels of analysis: the Analysis Stage and the Planning Stage. The main outputs of the first phase are the identification of the pursued objectives and the selection of the most viable strategy that should be implemented to achieve the expected results. In the planning stage the outcomes emerged during the analysis stage are transcribed into a practical, operational plan ready to be implemented, and this 'plan' is known as the Logical Framework Matrix. In conclusion, the PCM and LFA methodologies assure that projects funded by the EU shall be able to tackle real problems affecting civil society and to involve interested stakeholders and beneficiaries directly. High quality funded projects must display three key elements. First, they should be relevant, that is consistent with EU policies and interests and capable to establish a direct relationship with stakeholders' problems and needs. Second, they should be feasible as their internal consistency ensures a smooth implementation of the activities and the attainment of sustainable and concrete results. Third, they should be effective, that is capable to assure relevance and feasibility to activities during their whole implementation.

Chapter III focuses on a specific EU funding programme, Europe for Citizens 2014-2020, and consequently on the issues of EU citizenship and civil society's engagement in the Union democratic life and policy-making process. The Chapter is divided in three main sections: the first one examines the issue of citizenship of the Union, the second one describes the features, objectives and sub-actions (named Strands) of Europe for Citizens and the third is devoted to the compilation of the eForm for Strand 2 of the programme. As far as EU citizenship is concerned, it must be said that provisions on Union nationality were formally established with the Treaty of Maastricht and later reproduced with partial changes in the Treaty of Lisbon. Since the EU does not possess the fundamental features of a State as such, endowed with general competences, nor is there a condition analogous to that of the subjection of the individual person to the State, EU law has not insisted on regulating the ways of acquiring and losing nationality of the Union, rather it has left it

entirely to the various national citizenships and consequently to the various national bodies of law.² For this reasons, EU citizenship has frequently been understood as a loose concept merely complementing national citizenships, but actually it means more than that and consists of a series of well-established rights, set out in the Treaties. The dissertation examines the rights granted to EU citizens, focusing especially on the following ones: the power of the citizens' initiative, which allow citizens to directly approach the Commission with a request inviting it to submit a proposal for legal act of the Union, and the right of exit and entry from and to Member States as well as the right of residence. Understanding the significance of EU citizenship is essential to strengthen the process of European integration, increase democratic and civic participation and grow among citizens a sense of belonging to common values and ideals. Consequently, the European Union has implemented a range of actions fostering EU citizenship and democratic engagement, among which a programme specifically designed to promote active EU citizenship: 'Europe for Citizens'. This programme has been conceived with the purposes of raising awareness of remembrance and history of the Union, promoting peace and Union values and encouraging participation at Union level. The dissertation describes the programme general features, the strands it supports and the documents related to the funded actions. Finally, the last section of the Chapter provides an example of a project proposal under Strand 2 of the programme. The conceived project proposal involves a transnational consortium of eleven organisations engaged in the fields of education and youth and targets a specific group of EU citizens, youngsters between the age of 15 and 20 years old, with the primary purpose of supporting debate on EU citizenship and fostering young people's democratic and civic participation at Union level.

In conclusion, the dissertation aims at investigating the issue of EU funding and EU project management so as to make its own contribution towards an increased awareness of the bottom-up role played by EU transnational projects in support of the European strengthening. Indeed, at the present time there is still a scarce perception of the opportunities and advantages offered by the EU, and consequently a poor knowledge of the carrying out of EU policies and of the major provisions governing the management and allocation of EU funding.³ The ultimate purpose of this dissertation is, therefore, to show that the European Union is a framework able to foster cooperation between individuals, institutions, enterprises and organisations, as well as to innovate and make society more competitive and inclusive. In this sense, EU funding programmes should not be seen as mere source

² F. Rossi Dal Pozzo, *Citizenship Rights and Freedom of Movement on the European Union*, Alphen aan den Rijn, Kluwer, 2013, p. 6.

³ L. Monti, *L'Europa delle Regioni*, Roma, Luiss University Press, 2005, p. 108.

of funding, but as a invaluable tool for civil society to learn from others, grow and change for the better, whereas projects should be intended as useful opportunities to exchange knowledge, to collaborate in a multicultural environment and establish transnational networks and partnerships within the Union territory.

CHAPTER I - EUROPEAN FUNDS

CONTENTS: 1.Powers of the Commission: management of the budget and implementation of EU policies through funding allocations - 1.1.Article 17(1) TEU - 1.2.EU Budget - 1.2.1.Financial provisions: Articles 310-24 and the Financial Regulation - 1.2.2.Multiannual Financial Framework - 1.2.3.Allocation of EU funds: the difference between direct and indirect funding - 1.3.Europe 2020 Strategy - 1.3.1.Priorities, targets and flagship initiatives - 1.3.2.Has the Europe 2020 Strategy been working? - 2.Structural Funds - 2.1.Regional Policy - 2.1.1.Legal context: TFEU, Part Three, Title XVIII - 2.1.2.History of EU development policy - 2.1.3.Regional Policy in the programming period 2014-2020 - 2.2.Structural and Investment Funds: an overview - 2.2.1.European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) - 2.2.2.European Social Fund (ESF) - 2.2.3.Cohesion Fund (CF) - 2.2.4.European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) - 2.2.5.European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) - 2.3.European Structural and Investment Funds Regulations 2014-2020 - 2.3.1.Common Provisions Regulation (CPR) - 2.3.2.ERDF Regulation and ETC Regulation - 2.3.3.ESF Regulation - 2.3.4.CF Regulation - 2.3.5.EAFRD Regulation - 2.3.6.EMFF Regulation - 3.Funds managed directly by the European Commission - 3.1.Overview - 3.2.Main Funding Programmes - 3.2.1.Erasmus+ - 3.2.1.1.Legal basis - 3.2.1.2.Features and objectives - 3.2.1.3.Key actions and specific actions - 3.2.2.Horizon 2020 - 3.2.2.1.H2020 legal documents - 3.2.2.2.Structure of the programme - 3.2.3.COSME 2014-2020 - 3.2.3.1.COSME Regulation - 3.2.3.2.Actions supporting SMEs - 3.2.4.LIFE 2014-2020 - 3.2.4.1.LIFE Regulation - 3.2.4.2.Two sub-programmes for LIFE 2014-2020 - 3.3.Applying for funding - 3.3.1.Partnership - 3.3.2.Calls for proposals - 3.3.3.Documents for applicants

Chapter I on EU funding is divided into three macro-paragraphs: the first focuses on the Commission's powers of executing the budget and managing EU programmes, the second focuses on the Structural Funds and the third on EU direct funding. More specifically, the first macro-paragraph offers an overview of two of the several tasks performed by the European Commission: the execution of the EU budget in accordance with the provisions laid down in the Financial Regulation and in the Multiannual Financial Framework and the management of EU funding programmes whose overall goal is to promote Union interests and policies, and in particular the Europe 2020 Strategy. The other macro-paragraphs focus on how funds are allocated within the Union territory. The second macro-paragraph concerns the Union indirect management of financial resources through the five European Structural Funds which aim at implementing EU development policies in order to achieve high levels of regional growth and economic, social and territorial cohesion. The third macro-paragraph concerns the direct management of EU financial resources through the award of grants in response to specific funding programmes that tackle a broad range of fields and issues relevant to the Union growth and jobs Agenda for the years 2014-2020, such as education, training, youth, employment, social inclusion, citizenship, media and ICT, environment, innovation and research.

1. Powers of the Commission: management of the budget and implementation of EU policies through funding allocations

Section One of Chapter I is devoted to the analysis of two fundamental powers of the European Commission laid down in Article 17(1) of the Treaty on European Union: the execution of the EU budget and the management of programmes. In particular, paragraphs 1.1. and 1.2. will focus on how the EU budget works and allocates the available financial resources within the Union territory, while paragraph 1.3. will investigate the goals and objectives that EU funding is pursuing for the 2014-2020 programming period, notably the priorities, headline targets and flagship initiative set out by the Europe 2020 Strategy.

1.1. Article 17(1) TEU

The Treaty on European Union stipulates the European Commission's pivotal role in the promotion of the general interest of the Union. To fulfil this aim Article 17(1) TFEU entrusts the Commission with a number of distinct functions. As stated in Article 17(1),

*'the Commission shall promote the general interest of the Union and take appropriate actions to that end. It shall ensure the application of the Treaties, and of measures adopted by the institutions pursuant to them. It shall oversee the application of Union law under the control of the Court of Justice of the European Union. It shall execute the budget and manage programmes. It shall exercise coordinating, executive and management functions, as set out in the Treaties. With the exception of the common foreign and security policy, and other cases provided for in the Treaties, it shall ensure the Union's external representation. It shall initiate the Union's annual and multiannual programming with a view to achieving interinstitutional agreements'*⁴.

In the following analysis only two specific tasks of the Commission will be taken into consideration: the execution of the budget and the management of programmes. First of all, the Commission is in charge of the management of EU programmes, financial instruments aimed at strengthening the Union's efforts in a broad range of sectors. EU programmes are related to direct and indirect funding, and in some cases they are administered with the help of national and regional authorities. Secondly, another important responsibility of the European Commission is the execution of the budget, in cooperation with Member States and in accordance with the principles of 'sound

⁴ Article 17, Treaty on European Union.

financial management' which ensure that EU funds are spent properly⁵. Executing the budget is not an exclusive competence of the Commission, but it is largely shared with Member States, especially with regard to the management of European structural funds⁶. As Article 317 TFEU states, the Commission implements the budget together with the Member States, and Member States shall cooperate with the institution to ensure that Union resources are used in accordance with the principles of sound financial management⁷.

The management of a consistent part of the budget, around 76% out of the total, is shared, that is delegated to EU countries with the surveillance of the Commission (shared management). The Commission may also spend a part of the budget directly, in particular by selecting contractors and awarding grants. As far as grants are concerned, the Commission awards them in relation to specific funding programmes whose purpose is to ensure that the allocation of financial resources is in line with the political interests and priorities of the Union⁸: this is the case of centralised direct management. Along with this type of management, there also exists a centralised indirect management often delegated to specific Agencies: this is, for example, the case of the Erasmus+ Programme whose grants are administered by National Agencies due to the large number of beneficiaries.

Given this general overview on the Commission's functions laid down in Article 17(1) TEU, the next sections will explain in detail how the EU budget is managed and how funding programmes work.

1.2. EU Budget

The EU budget is regulated by the provisions laid down in the Treaties, especially in Articles 310-324 TFEU, and also by EU legislation, notably the Financial Regulation, and by other agreements between the EU institutions, like the Interinstitutional Agreement signed on 17th May 2006 on budgetary discipline and sound financial management.

The budget is financed from Union's own resources. These resources come from: traditional own resources (duties charged on imports of products from non-EU States); resources based on value

⁵ G. Tesauro, *Diritto dell'Unione Europea*, VII edizione, Padova, CEDAM, 2013, p. 74.

⁶ U. Villani, *Istituzioni di diritto dell'UE*, III edizione, Bari, Cacucci, 2013, p. 174.

⁷ Article 317, Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

⁸ M. Mulazzani, E. Gori, *Il bilancio generale e i finanziamenti dell'Unione Europea*, Milano, F. Angeli, 2003, p. 129.

added tax (VAT); resources based on gross national income (GNI); other resources such as income from third countries for participation in EU programmes or tax paid by EU personnel.⁹

The EU budget is implemented by the Commission through concrete actions in a broad range of areas to sustain EU policies and interests. In order to ensure that expenditure is managed smoothly and does not exceed the available resources¹⁰, a Multiannual Financial Framework must be established. This document is a key instrument to develop a long-term strategy for investment. It provides, in fact, a framework for financial expenditure and budgetary discipline so as to ensure that Union spending runs smoothly and remains within the established limits.

In following paragraphs the analysis of the budgetary system will focus on three major aspects: how the EU budget is defined in EU legislation, how the EU plans a coherent and predictable financial programming, and how EU funds are allocated.

1.2.1. Financial provisions: Articles 310-24 TFEU and the Financial Regulation

The points of reference for the EU budget and EU finances are the principles and procedures laid down in Articles 310-24 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and in the Regulation (EU, EURATOM) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union and repealing Council Regulation (EC; Euratom) No 1605/2002. The EU budget is composed by the revenue and expenditure of the Union (principle of unity), and each revenue and expenditure is booked in a line in the budget (principle of budgetary accuracy)¹¹. Indeed, as Article 310(1) TFEU states,

'all items of revenue and expenditure of the Union shall be included in estimates to be drawn up for each financial year and shown in the budget'.¹²

As far as revenue is concerned, the budget is financed from the Union's own resources. Despite the autonomy of these resources, the Council may establish new types of own resources or abolish an existing category after having consulted the European Parliament. However, any change does not

⁹ European Commission, *The EU's own resources*: <http://ec.europa.eu/budget/mff/resources/index_en.cfm> [Accessed: 20/07/2015].

¹⁰ Article 312(1), Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

¹¹ Regulation (EU, EURATOM) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union and repealing Council Regulation (EC; Euratom) No 1605/2002, OJ L 298, 26.10.2012, p. 18.

¹² Article 310(1), Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

enter into force if the Member States do not approve them: thus, the unanimity of the Member States within the Council is required, as well as the approval of each Member State in accordance with its respective constitutional requirements.¹³

The EU budget is annual, as it runs from 1 January to 31 December (principle of annuality): it contains every expenditure and revenue expected for the year in question, and each item of expenditure is classified according to its nature or purpose (Article 316 TFEU). Moreover, the accounts must be presented in euro as established by the principle of unit account.

Article 314(10) TFEU provides that there must be a balance between revenue and expenditure according to the principle of equilibrium. The balance from each financial year enters in the budget for the following year as revenue in the case of surplus or as a payment appropriation in the case of deficit. In accordance with the principle of universality, revenue shall cover payment appropriations, and revenue and expenditure shall be entered in full without any adjustment.¹⁴

Other two important principles characterising the EU budget are the principle of specification, which says that appropriations must be earmarked for specific purposes by title and chapter and chapters shall be further divided into articles and items, and the principle of transparency, which requires that both revenue's acquisition and the allocation of financial spending follow parameters that are objective, equal and uniformly established¹⁵.

Furthermore, Article 317 TFEU sets out the fundamental principles of sound financial management. Those principles are also mentioned in Article 30 of the Financial Regulation, defined as principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The principle of economy establishes that resources spent by the institution to finalise its activities should be made available in due time, in appropriate quantity and quality and at the best price¹⁶. The principle of efficiency refers to the relationship between resources employed and results achieved and the principle of effectiveness refers to the achievement of specific and measurable objectives and results.

Finally, additional features governing the EU budget have been introduced by the revised Financial Regulation (FR) whose most significant improvements have been the following: simplification in terms of cutting red tape and hastening procedures; accountability which should guarantee sound

¹³ U. Villani, *op. cit.*, p. 201.

¹⁴ Regulation (EU, EURATOM) No 966/2012, OJ L 298, 26.10.2012, p. 21.

¹⁵ M. Mulazzani, E. Gori, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

¹⁶ Regulation (EU, EURATOM) No 966/2012, OJ L 298, 26.10.2012, p. 24.

financial management and protect Union financial interests; leverage which introduces financial arrangements enabling the mobilisation of third-party funds as leverage on EU resources¹⁷.

The adoption of the annual budget is regulated by Article 314 TFEU and Title III of the Financial Regulation, both establishing that the European Parliament and the Council shall act jointly and in accordance with a special legislative procedure. Before 1st July each institution, with the exception of the Central Bank, realises an estimated plan of expenditure for the following financial year. After that, the Commission, within the deadline of 1st September, puts together these drafts and creates a unique draft budget with an estimate of total revenue and expenditure. The draft budget is, then, revised by the Council within 1st October. In the following forty-two days the Parliament may either approve the position of the Council (in this case the budget is adopted) or may not take a decision (the budget is adopted anyway). The Parliament may also adopt amendments by the majority of its members: in this case the amended draft budget returns to the Council. Within ten days the Council must decide whether all the amendments of the Parliament are adopted or not. If they are not adopted, a Conciliation Committee must be created in order to reach an agreement within twenty-one days of its being convened. If the Committee does not come up with a final joint text, the initial draft budget proposed by the Commission is definitely rejected, and the Commission must elaborate another draft budget.

Once the budget is adopted, its implementation is up to the Commission: Article 317 TFEU states that the Commission implements the budget by cooperating with the Member States and Article 53 of the Financial Regulation affirms that it is up to the Commission to implement the revenue and expenditure budget and that Member States must collaborate with the institution to spend the money properly in accordance with the principles of sound financial management. As set in Chapter II of the Financial Regulation, there are distinct methods of implementation of the budget by the Commission. The first method is direct management, while the second one is indirect management, which is entrusted to a number of designated entities specified in Article 58(1), such as third countries, international organisations, public law bodies. In addition, the Commission can manage resources under shared management in collaboration with Member States, which means that the task is delegated to EU countries that have to respect the budgetary principles of transparency, sound financial management and non-discrimination and to spend funds in order to contribute to EU policies and objectives.

¹⁷ European Commission, *Financial Regulation*:

<http://ec.europa.eu/budget/biblio/documents/regulations/regulations_en.cfm#2> [Accessed: 30/06/2015].

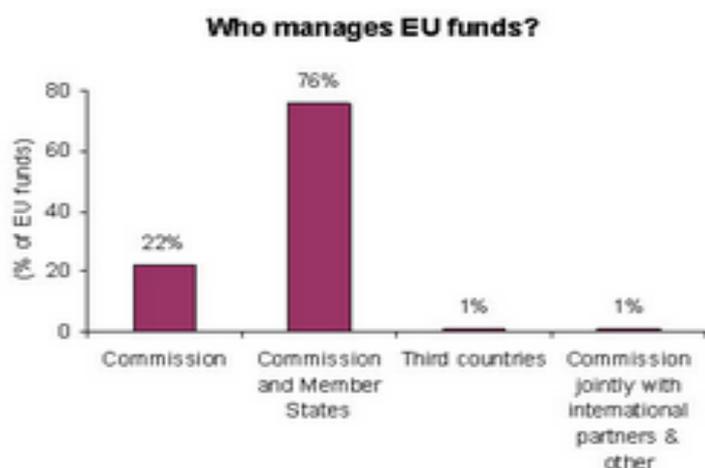


Figure 1. – Management of EU funds¹⁸

In second and third paragraphs of this Chapter (‘Structural Funds’ and ‘Funds managed directly by the European Commission’), the issues of direct and shared management will be tackled in a deeper manner through the analysis of structural funds and grants awarded in relation to EU funding programmes.

1.2.2. Multiannual Financial Framework

The Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) is a framework through which the Union plans financial programming over a period of at least five years and complies with strict budgetary discipline. The MFF 2014-2020 covers six years, from 2014 to 2020, and it lays down the maximum amounts, called ‘ceilings’, that can be spent by the EU in different political sectors, known as ‘headings’. The norms concerning the MFF are set out in Article 312 TFEU. According to the first paragraph of this Article,

‘the Multiannual Financial Framework shall ensure that Union expenditure develops in an orderly manner and within the limits of its own resources. It shall be established for a period of at least five years. The annual budget of the Union shall comply with the Multiannual Financial Framework’¹⁹.

The second paragraph of Article 312 TFEU describes the special legislative procedure for the establishment of the MFF. After the approval of the Parliament, the Council acts unanimously in order to adopt a regulation laying down the financial framework. Throughout this procedure the

¹⁸ Table taken from European Commission, *Who manages the money?:* <http://ec.europa.eu/budget/explained/management/managt_who/who_en.cfm> [Accessed: 28/06/2015].

¹⁹ Article 312(1), Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

Parliament, the Council and the Commission might take any measure necessary to facilitate the regulation adoption (Article 312(5) TFEU). If the new financial framework is not adopted before the end of the previous one, the ceilings of that framework must be extended until the adoption of a new one (Article 314(4) TFEU). Finally, the task of the financial framework is specified in the third paragraph of Article 312 TFEU, stating that it defines the amounts of the annual ceilings on commitment appropriations according to the category of expenditure and of the annual ceiling on payment appropriations and, if necessary, it shall set out further provisions for the annual budgetary programming to develop smoothly²⁰.

Council Regulation (EU, EURATOM) No 1311/2013 of 2 December 2013 has established the Multiannual Financial Framework for the years 2014-2020. The MFF 2014-2020 sets out an amount of EUR 960 billion for commitment allocations and of EUR 908 billion for payment appropriations²¹. In 2016, as specified in Article 2 of the Council Regulation, the Commission must revise the current financial framework in the light of possible changes in the macro-economic situation. The following table shows the allocation of commitment appropriations per year, as revised in February 2015 and adjusted for the review expected in 2016:



Figure 2. – MFF 2014-2020²²

²⁰ Article 312(3), Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

²¹ Council Regulation (EU, EURATOM) No 1311/2013 of 2 December 2013 laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2014-2020, OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 8.

²² Table taken from European Commission, *Figures and documents*: http://ec.europa.eu/budget/mff/figures/index_en.cfm [Accessed: 28/06/2015].

Annex I of the Regulation (EU, EURATOM) No 1311/2013 presents a detailed table specifying the headings or categories of expense corresponding to the different fields of EU intervention and lists the maximum amounts of the ceilings that can be spent. There are two types of ceilings (an annual ceiling for each heading and a total annual ceiling), whereas the established headings are six:

1. Smart and Inclusive Growth, which is further divided into ‘Competitiveness for growth and jobs’, concerning research and innovation, education and training, social policy, transport and telecommunications, and ‘Economic, social and territorial cohesion’, aimed at fostering regional policy;
2. Sustainable Growth, which does not only include environmental actions, but also the common agricultural policy, common fisheries policy and rural development;
3. Security and citizenship, which concerns a broad range of fields, from home affairs, justice, immigration, public health to culture, youth, citizens’ engagement;
4. Global Europe, which refers to EU foreign policy;
5. Administration, covering the expenditure of EU institutions;
6. Compensations, that is temporary payments to Croatia for its first year after its entry into the Union.²³

The table below clearly shows the criteria used to establish how the commitments shall be invested:

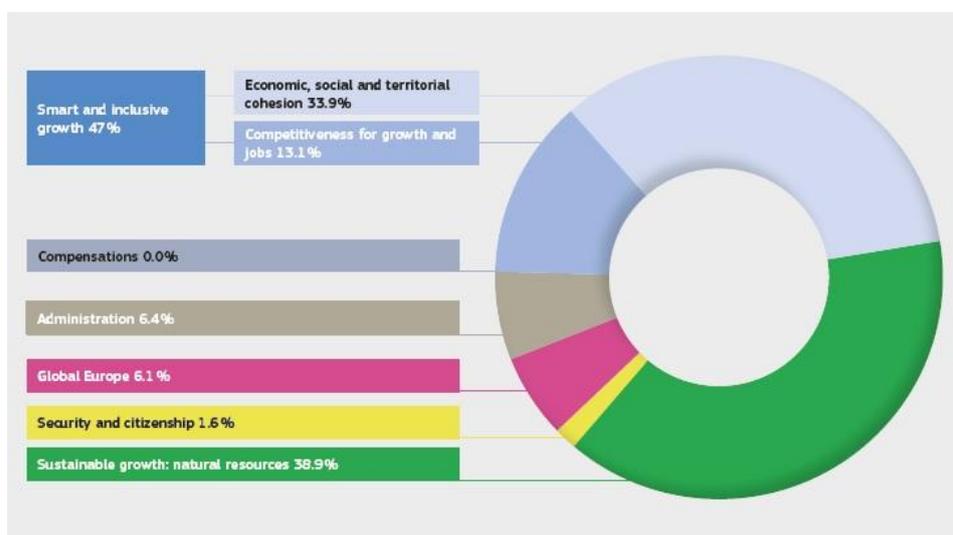


Figure 3 - MFF 2014-2020 overview²⁴

²³ European Commission, *The MFF explained*: <http://ec.europa.eu/budget/mff/introduction/index_en.cfm> [Accessed: 28/06/2015].

²⁴ Table taken from: European Commission, *Multiannual financial framework 2014-2020 and the EU budget. The figures*, Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union, 2013, p. 9.

Finally, in Chapter II the Council Regulation outlines a number of special financial instruments that may be used in the case of unforeseen events, such as a crisis or an emergency situation. An example is the Emergency Aid Reserve, which has been established for humanitarian interventions in third countries damaged by unpredictable and destructive events, or the European Union Solidarity Fund which provides financial assistance in the case of major disasters in a EU country or in a candidate country. Other financial instruments are the so-called 'Flexibility Instrument' for specific expenses not included in the budget, the 'Specific Flexibility' for youth unemployment and research, the 'Global Margin for growth and employment' (especially youth employment) and the 'European Globalisation Adjustment Fund' for the reallocation into the labour market of workers who have been made redundant. Lastly, a 'Contingency Margin' of up to 0.03%²⁵ of the Union's GNI has been envisaged for unexpected and unpredictable events.

In conclusion, the Multiannual Financial Framework is an important instrument for the Union to establish a coherent and predictable financial programming and to foster discipline and transparency in the management of the budget. Indeed, the MFF develops a long-term strategy to help EU institutions carry out the policies and priorities laid down in a specific period of time, notably at the present time the goals of the European Agenda for 2014-2020, better known as the Europe 2020 Strategy.

1.2.3. Allocation of EU funds: the difference between direct and indirect funding

The European Union provides funding for a broad range of initiatives, projects and programmes covering sectors such as employment, education, research and development, environment and sustainable development. As explained in the previous paragraphs, the Commission is responsible for ensuring that money is spent properly within the Union territory. Funding, in fact, is managed according to established rules that ensure there is strict control over how funds are used and whether they are spent in a transparent and legal way. EU funds can be managed by the Commission in a direct or indirect manner. On one hand, some financial resources are managed directly by the EU, and they take the forms of grants or contracts. On the other hand, the remainder of EU funds, called 'structural funds', is spent through a system of shared management involving both the Commission and the authorities of Member States.

²⁵ Council Regulation (EU, EURATOM) No 1311/2013, OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 5.

A large part of the EU budget, over 76% of the total amount²⁶, is managed in cooperation with national and regional bodies through five key Funds known as ‘the Structural and Investment Funds’: European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) aimed at enhancing regional, local and urban development; Cohesion Fund (CF) providing financial assistance to EU less-developed regions; European Social Fund (ESF) for social inclusion and better governance; European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) supporting rural areas; European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) fostering sustainable fisheries and aquaculture.

The ESI Funds are powerful tools that help to develop a series of sectors crucial for the Union, such as agriculture, fisheries, rural development, education, tourism and transport, and they also seek to promote economic, social and territorial cohesion in order to fight against social exclusion and underdevelopment²⁷. Indeed, structural funds can be used as a means to improve synergies between the different policies at European, national and regional level, as well as to encourage public and private investments.²⁸ The ultimate aims are to foster structural and economic development in the less-favoured regions and to renew the market labour and education and training systems.²⁹ This type of EU funds is managed in cooperation with the European Commission. To ensure that EU financial resources are spent properly and their supply achieve concrete results, the EU institution establishes the overall programming and approach for a given period of time, generally seven years, and sets out the so-called ‘partnership agreements’ with each Member State in order to define in detail the spending of financial resources and the objectives to be pursued and achieved.

The remainder of EU financial resources is managed directly by the Union and delivered in the form of grants and contracts. On one hand grants are direct financial contributions from the budget which should help to achieve Union policy priorities.³⁰ In general, they are awarded for projects in relation to EU policies. These projects are linked to specific programmes established for a given period of

²⁶ European Union, *EU funding*: <http://europa.eu/about-eu/funding-grants/index_en.htm> [Accessed: 29/07/2015].

²⁷ A. Massot Marti, A.M. Nogueira, I. Popescu, E. Kramer, M. Thomas, P. Soave, *Structural and cohesion policies for 2020: tools to overcome the crisis*, Brussels, Policy Department B: Structural and Cohesion Policies, 2011, p. 45.

²⁸ Research Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation, p. 2.
<http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/smart_specialisation_en.pdf> [Accessed: 29/06/2015].

²⁹ M. Palumbo, C. Aprile, *Manuale di finanza agevolata: incentivi nazionali, programmi comunitari e fondi strutturali*, Milanofiori Assago, IPSOA, 2001, p. 19.

³⁰ European Commission, *Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the Union and its rules of application*, Luxembourg, Publications of the European Union, 2014, p. 228.

time (the present programming period started in 2014 and will last until 2020), and project proposals can be submitted to the Commission through a public announcement known as 'call for proposals'. The financed projects shall pursue the interests of the Union, in particular the key objectives that represent the core of the Europe 2020 Strategy, and they shall strengthen EU intervention in a range of fields such as environment, education and training, research and innovation, democratic and civic participation. On the other hand, contracts are awarded through calls for tender and released by EU institutions to buy services, goods or works (for example studies, technical assistance, training, conference organisation, IT equipment)³¹, and the payment is delivered once the goods or services have been supplied. In contrast, EU grants awarded for projects can never produce a profit and they are subjected to four strict rules laid down in the Financial Regulation. The first rule is the no-profit rule, which means that the grant cannot produce a profit for the beneficiary. The second one is the co-financing rule, according to which the grant does not finance the entire cost of the implemented action, and consequently the beneficiary must contribute to its realisation either by its own resources or by financial contribution from third parties. No double financing is the third rule set out in the Financial Regulation, establishing that each project must be funded only by one grant awarded by the EU. The last rule is the principle of non-retroactivity, according to which the grant cannot finance projects that had been already financed and realised in the past.³² Excluding calls for tender and contracts which should be seen as the exception and not the rule, the general aim of direct funding is to support the implementation of transnational projects that shall be consistent with EU growth strategy and, at the same time, shall respond to the specific thematic priorities set out by the funding programmes. Through the financing of those projects the European Union aims at fostering a free exchange of ideas, best practices, new approaches, as well as experiences arisen in different national contexts.

In conclusion the 2014-2020 programming period has defined, at European and national level, the available amount of financial resources and the key policies to be pursued through the use of both structural and direct funds. Indeed, the Union has renewed its commitment to sustain transnational cooperation and other policies, essential to achieve smart, inclusive and sustainable growth pursued by the Europe 2020 Strategy and ultimately to build a stronger Europe.

³¹ M. D'Amico, *Progettare in Europa: tecniche e strumenti per l'accesso e la gestione dei finanziamenti dell'Unione Europea*, Trento, Edizioni Erickson, 2014, p. 172.

³² M. D'Amico, *op. cit.*, p. 174.

1.3. Europe 2020 Strategy

Europe 2020 is the EU strategy for growth and jobs. It was adopted by the European Council on the 17th June 2010, and it is the successor of the Lisbon strategy, launched in March 2000. In 2010 the European Union found itself in the middle of a raging and challenging situation from an economic point of view: as highlighted in the Communication from the Commission *Europe 2020 - A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth*, the crisis has blotted out years of economic and social development, and it has exposed European economy to structural weaknesses and long-term challenges, such as globalisation, pressure on resources, ageing³³.

For those reasons, the European Union has set out a new agenda for its Member States which aims at overcoming structural weaknesses and strengthening economy by improving competitiveness, employment and productivity. The key objective of the Europe 2020 Strategy is, therefore, to make Europe a smarter, more sustainable and more inclusive place to live³⁴. As the President of the Commission, José Manuel Barroso, affirmed in the preface of the 2010 Communication *Europe 2020 - A strategy for smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth*:

*'2010 must mark a new beginning. We must have confidence in our ability to set an ambitious agenda for ourselves and then gear our efforts to delivering it.'*³⁵

In order to achieve this, the Agenda for Europe 2020 has set out three priorities, five targets and seven flagship initiatives to be pursued during the decade and ultimately by 2020.

1.3.1. Priorities, targets and flagship initiatives

Starting from the analysis of the three priorities, the Europe 2020 Strategy shall pursue growth that is: smart by promoting an economy based on knowledge and innovation; sustainable by encouraging a greener and more resource-efficient economy; and inclusive by fostering employment, social cohesion and poverty reduction. Smart growth means strengthening knowledge and innovation so as to improve the quality of education, research performance, innovation transfer within the Union by making use of information and communication technologies. Sustainable growth

³³ European Commission, *Europe 2020 - A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth*, COM(2010) 2020 final, Brussels, 2010, p.5.

³⁴ Eurostat, *Smarter, greener, more inclusive? Indicators to support the Europe 2020 strategy*, Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union, 2013, p. 15.

³⁵ COM(2010) 2020 final, Brussels, 2010, p. 2.

aims at promoting a more resource-efficient, greener and competitive economy by exploiting new processes and technologies, including green technologies. Lastly, inclusive growth means reaching high levels of employment, investing in skills, reducing poverty, supporting the creation of a more cohesive society.

To achieve a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, the EU has also set out a number of headline targets for the years 2014-2020. These five targets should be representative and measurable and they concern a broad range of fields: employment, research and development, climate and energy, education, social inclusion and poverty reduction. Initially the targets were outlined in the Commission Communication *Europe 2020 – A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth* of 3 March 2010. Then, on 17th June 2010, they were adopted by the European Council with some changes: in fact, their formulation slightly differs in the two documents.³⁶ The five targets for Europe 2020, as defined in the Council Conclusions, are the following:

1. employment: 75% of the 20-64 year-olds to be employed;
2. R&D: 3% of the EU's GDP to be invested in research and development;
3. climate change and energy: greenhouse gas emissions reduced of 20% compared to the year 1990, 20% of energy obtained from renewable resources, 20% increase in energy efficiency;
4. education: the rates of early school leaving reduced below 10% and 40% of 30-34-year-olds completing third level education;
5. poverty reduction and social inclusion: at least 20 million of people taken away from the risk of poverty or social exclusion.³⁷

In addition to priorities and targets, the Europe 2020 Strategy identifies seven policy areas that will serve as engines for growth and employment and that are generally known as the 'seven flagship initiatives'. The first flagship initiative is 'Digital agenda for Europe' for the improvement of high-speed Internet, as well as information and communication technologies. The second is 'Innovation Union' for the creation of an innovative environment in which conditions and access to finance for research and development are improved. The third is 'Youth on the move', which aims at enhancing education systems and helping young people to enter into the labour market. The fourth is 'Resource-efficient Europe', which supports a more resource-efficient economy through the use of green technologies and renewable resources, the preservation of biodiversity and the promotion of energy efficiency. The fifth is called 'An industrial policy for the globalisation era' and supports the development of a stronger, more competitive and diversified industrial sector. The last two flagship

³⁶ Eurostat, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

³⁷ European Council Conclusions, 17 June 2010, EUCO 13/10, Brussels, 2010, Annex I, p. 11-2.

initiatives are 'An agenda for new skills and jobs' for the improvement and modernisation of the labour market and 'European platform against poverty' supporting social and territorial cohesion in order to reduce poverty and social exclusion.³⁸

Finally, the goals outlined by Europe 2020 can be met using other tools for growth too: a stronger and extended single market which is vital for growth and job creation, private finance and cohesion policy for investing in growth, and additional external policy instruments that refer to various internal policies (e.g. trade, energy, transport, agriculture, R&D).

1.3.2. Has the Europe 2020 Strategy been working?

In 2010 the European Union set out an agenda for the following decade so as to improve its competitiveness, to deliver high levels of employment and productivity and to overcome the structural challenges posed by the worst economic and financial crisis that the EU has ever faced³⁹. The aim was to exit stronger from the crisis: that was Europe's moment truth, it was the time to be bold and ambitious, as the Commission's President José Manuel Barroso wrote in the Commission Communication *Europe 2020 - A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth*⁴⁰.

Four years after the launch of Europe 2020 the Commission elaborated another Communication, entitled *Taking stock of the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth*, to evaluate the effectiveness of the Europe 2020 Strategy and analyse what has happened within its framework. The crisis has had a severe impact on Europe, increasing the levels of poverty and unemployment, as well as the differences in performance between Member States in several fields. Consequently, the economic recession has also affected the five headline targets set out in 2010 in different ways: positive trends can be identified in the areas of education and climate, while the levels of poverty and unemployment have increased. In particular, in 2012 the EU employment rate stood at 68.4%, compared to 68.5% in 2010 and 70.3% in 2008. Investment in R&D has also decreased, and the 3% target for 2020 is unlikely to be reached. Moreover the crisis has targeted those people at risk of poverty and social exclusion, as their number increased from 114 million in 2009 to 124 million in 2012. In contrast, greenhouse gas emissions lowered to 18% in 2012 and the target concerning the field of education is thought to be easily achieved by 2020, since the share of

³⁸ Information on the seven flagship initiatives was taken from: European Commission, *Europe 2020*: <http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/europe-2020-in-a-nutshell/flagship-initiatives/index_en.htm> [Accessed: 30/06/2015].

³⁹ European Commission, *Taking stock of the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth*, COM(2014) 130 final/2, Brussels, 2014, p. 3.

⁴⁰ COM(2010) 2020 final, Brussels, 2010, p. 2.

early school leavers fell to 12.7% and young people that completed tertiary education increased to 35.7% in 2012.⁴¹

Whether Europe 2020 has played a decisive role in tackling the negative effects of the current economic and financial crisis is still a matter of debate. So far the outcomes of the headline targets and flagship initiatives have been heterogeneous. The EU is coming closer to certain targets, such as those concerning education, climate and energy, but not those concerning employment, research and poverty reduction. The gap between and within EU countries is widening and the growing inequalities in the distribution of wealth and income are becoming a new pressing challenge. However the motives for supporting the Europe 2020 Strategy are still crucial today as they were in 2010: in order to face the worst economic and financial crisis in a generation, the EU needs to reinforce its smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and jobs agenda so as to fulfil the expectations of its citizens and keep unchanged its role in the world⁴².

2. Structural Funds

Section Two of Chapter I is devoted to the analysis of EU structural policy and structural funds, instruments thought to have a pivotal role in the achievement of the Europe 2020 Strategy goals, as well as in the overcoming of current economic difficulties. EU structural policy promotes social and economic cohesion within the territories of Member States, since the disparities in income, development, infrastructure and employment between EU regions have an inevitable negative impact on European integration and stability. For this reason, it is fundamental to create the necessary conditions for the sustainable development of regions, based on an equal distribution of resources. This is the key objective of the structural funds, aimed at constructing a stronger, more competitive Europe and at assuring that the supply of financial resources achieves concrete results.

The European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI Funds) are five: European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), European Social Fund (ESF), Cohesion Fund (CF), European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF). Each fund has its own features, which will be analysed in paragraphs 2.2. and 2.3., but what they all have in common is that they provide financial assistance for the attainment of specific objectives favoured by the Union. Structural funds are given to Member States so as to foster economic development of the less-favoured areas across the EU. They are facilitations aimed at improving investment in

⁴¹ All previous data were taken from: COM(2014) 130 final/2, Brussels, 2014, p. 11-4.

⁴² COM(2014) 130 final/2, Brussels, 2014, p. 20.

enterprises and at reducing regional imbalances by promoting social and economic cohesion, constructing of new infrastructure and creating more jobs opportunities.

The management of structural funds is carried out by national and regional bodies of Member States in partnership with the European Commission. This type of management is known as 'shared management'. The Commission only supervises the supply of funds and does not select or manage individual projects, but it establishes the overall programming and the general approach for the achievement of key priorities.⁴³ In general, the regional policy budget covers seven years, and partnership agreements between the Commission and individual EU countries are set out for this lapse of time. Partnership agreements approve the national authorities' plans regarding the use of financial resources delivered by the Structural and Investment Funds and they define countries' strategic objectives and investment priorities.

In the following paragraphs the analysis will focus on EU regional and cohesion policies, explaining their legal basis and giving a brief description of their evolution up to the launch of the Europe 2020 Strategy, then it will continue with the investigation of the five Structural Investment Funds, their Regulations and main features.

2.1. Regional policy

The EU normative base has long conveyed the ideal of interrelated economic and social integration. The Treaty founding the European Economic Community referred to the existing disparities between European regions, whereas the Treaty of Maastricht specified a combination of goals for achieving economic and social cohesion, such as a high degree of convergence of economic performance, a high level of employment, social protection and solidarity among Member States⁴⁴. However it was the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union that gave a definition of 'economic, social and territorial cohesion' for the first time.

Imbalances between regions in terms of economic development and quality of life have always been a permanent feature of every Member State, and if we consider the Union as a whole those disparities become more significant. Territorial imbalances cannot be reduced quickly, and experience has demonstrated that the free movement of the market forces is not enough to guarantee a sustainable and balanced development within Europe: therefore, it is necessary to

⁴³ A. Rotunno, *Fondi strutturali: uno strumento per l'Europa*, Milano, C.C.I.A.A., 1995, p. 14.

⁴⁴ D. Schiek, *Economic and social integration. The challenge for EU constitutional law*, Cheltenham, Edward Elgar Publishing, 2012, p. 216-9.

combine public and private intervention and to call for more solidarity within the Union in order to promote an armonious process of integration⁴⁵.

Broadly speaking, regional policy can be referred to cohesion policy as its overall goal is to strengthen what is known as 'economic, social and territorial cohesion' in the European less-favoured regions. Economic and social cohesion means boosting competitiveness and green economic growth across EU regions and providing citizens with better services, more job opportunities and a better quality of life, whereas territorial cohesion means connecting regions so that they can cooperate one with another to tackle common challenges.⁴⁶ Regional policy is also an expression of solidarity between EU countries as it delivers financial resources to EU less-developed regions and it helps these regions to strengthen their economic potential. EU funding for the achievement of cohesion is, therefore, bound up with the concepts of equality and solidarity.⁴⁷

In conclusion structural funds represent a precious instrument for economic and social cohesion policy, intended to foster EU countries' development and to fight against territorial imbalances. These resources are used to finance specific projects, which cover a broad range of fields and complement other policies such as those dealing with education, employment, energy, environment, research and innovation, strategic infrastructures. Thus, regional policy serves as a catalyst for public and private financing, not only because it urges Member States to co-finance projects from their national budgets but also because it enhances investor confidence⁴⁸.

2.1.1. Legal context: TFEU, Part Three, Title XVIII

Regional and cohesion policies have started to be central concerns for Europe since the mid-1980s. Today a significant chunk of the EU budget is devoted to those policies, which are said to play a crucial role in advancing the integration process. Over the years EU legislation has approached the issue ending up by providing a complete and precise definition of economic, social and territorial cohesion in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. Title XVIII TFEU is, indeed, entitled 'Economic, social and territorial cohesion'.

According to Article 174 TFEU, the Union shall pursue actions aimed at the strengthening of its economic, social and territorial cohesion. The latter is achieved by reducing disparities between the

⁴⁵ A. Rotunno, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

⁴⁶ European Commission, *The European Union explained: Regional Policy*, Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union, 2014, p. 5.

⁴⁷ A. Evans, *The EU Structural Funds*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 19.

⁴⁸ European Commission, *The European Union explained: Regional Policy*, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

development of EU regions and the backwardness of the least favoured areas. Among the concerned regions specific attention needs to be paid to rural areas, as well as areas influenced by industrial transition and areas suffering from serious and enduring natural or demographic handicaps, especially northern regions with very low population density, but also islands and cross-border or mountainous regions⁴⁹.

As Article 175 TFEU states, the objectives established in Article 174 must be achieved thanks to actions and policies set out by Member States, by the Structural Funds, the European Investment Bank and other existing financial instruments. The definition of the Structural Funds actions is up to the European Parliament and the Council, which shall act in accordance to the ordinary legislative procedure and consult the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. The European Parliament is, thus, the co-legislator with a view to economic, social and territorial cohesion⁵⁰ and, together with the Council, it shall

*'define tasks, priority objectives and the organisation of the Structural Funds; the general rules applicable to them and the provisions necessary to ensure their effectiveness and the coordination of the Funds with one another and with the other existing financial instruments shall be also defined by the same procedure'*⁵¹.

Finally, Title XVIII TFEU also provides guidelines for two specific Funds that should promote economic, social and territorial cohesion directly, that is the European Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund. The former concentrates on the structural adjustments of regional imbalances and the development of declining industrial regions, whereas the latter is more focused on the financing of projects concerning environment and trans-European networks.

2.1.2. History of EU development policies

The origins of social and economic cohesion policy can be traced back to the EEC Treaty in 1957, whose preamble referred to the existing disparities between the different regions of EC Member

⁴⁹ Article 174, Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

⁵⁰ A. Massot Marti, A.M. Nogueira, I. Popescu, E. Kramer, M. Thomas, P. Soave, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

⁵¹ Article 177, Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

States.⁵² Since then cohesion policy has increased in importance, being understood as the key tool for the attainment of social, economic and institutional benefits for the Member States⁵³.

The 1950s and 1960s represented a prosperous period for Europe, which experienced high levels of growth. In that period EC Member States were more concerned with fuelling economic growth through greater economic integration rather than addressing the question of uneven development.⁵⁴ Nevertheless, since the 1970s the Community became more aware of the economic disparities that existed within its territories and of their implications on the future integration process. Thus, it set out a series of initiatives to coordinate and implement the financial instruments used by Member States, and it took the first steps towards the establishment of a European regional policy. There were several reasons behind this change: although Europe had experienced high levels of growth in the previous decades, territorial imbalances within the Community still existed at the beginning of the 1970s; and those imbalances were perceived clearly for the first time in 1973, with the entry of Denmark, the United Kingdom and Ireland into the EC⁵⁵. Consequently, the 1970s saw two important events for the strengthening of regional and cohesion policies. First, in 1972 a summit of heads of state and government was held in Paris, and on that occasion all they highlighted the need to analyse in a closer manner the existing regional disparities within the Community and to conceive specific actions for their reduction. Second, the year 1975 saw the creation of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), which represented the first instrument to tackle territorial disparities within Europe. Originally, the ERDF was established to help English underdeveloped regions, but then it started to finance projects and investment in the European less-developed regions.⁵⁶ The objective was to correct regional imbalances, especially in those rural areas suffering from structural unemployment. Thus, the ERDF became the key means of the European development policy, and over the years it has strengthened its power and increased its financial endowment.

A decisive step in addressing territorial disparities in a more effective manner was made with the signing of the Single European Act, which introduced for the first time the concept of economic and social cohesion laying the ground for the present EU regional policy. After that, the principle of economic and social cohesion was re-affirmed with the reform of the Structural Funds in 1988, a

⁵² M. Fadda, F. Montemurra, *Fondi UE e sviluppo locale*, Milano, Il sole-24 ore, 2004, p. 23.

⁵³ C. Brasili, *Cambiamenti strutturali e convergenza economica nelle regioni dell'Unione Europea*, Bologna, CLUEB, 2005, p. 73.

⁵⁴ A. Rodriguez-Pose, *The European Union: economy, society, and polity*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002, p. 43.

⁵⁵ A. Rodriguez-Pose, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

⁵⁶ C. Brasili, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

profound reform of European development policies that tried to address most of the factors which had limited the effectiveness of the early European regional policy. The reform was based on a set of established principles.⁵⁷ First, territorial and financial concentration was pursued to increase the efficiency of European intervention, with a real impact on development. In addition, attention was devoted to programming in order to put emphasis on the design and implementation of coherent development strategies, as well as to partnership in order to involve as many actors as possible in the process of the design and implementation of strategies. Lastly, the additionality principle was strengthened to prevent States from using European development policies as a simple substitute for their national ones. The reform of the Structural Funds represented a concrete boost to the achievement of economic and social cohesion. From being a non-existent sector of the budget in the 1960s and representing a lesser policy in the 1970s, development policies have become a European key interest since the reform of the Structural Funds.⁵⁸

In 1992 the revision of the Maastricht Treaty acknowledged the principle of economic and social cohesion as one of the major priorities and established the Cohesion Fund to guarantee the convergence of four Member States (Greece, Spain, Portugal and Ireland). In the following years the resources for the structural and cohesion Funds were increased substantially, becoming a third of the EU overall budget⁵⁹. Furthermore, the Structural Funds were subject to another reform in 1999, concerning the 2000-2006 programming period. The Agenda for the years 2000-2006, called the Lisbon Strategy, was designed for the construction of a stronger and larger Europe, which had to improve the efficiency of its financial instruments and to support more regional and social cohesion in the light of a possible future enlargement of the Union⁶⁰. The Lisbon Strategy put more emphasis on growth, jobs and innovation, and consequently the priorities of cohesion policy were also shifted to reflect this change. The financial endowment for cohesion policy during the 2000-2006 period consisted of EUR 213 billion⁶¹, and a clearer division of the competences between the Commission and national and regional authorities of Member States was established, especially through the strengthening of their responsibility for the management of structural funds. The 2000 Agenda represented, therefore, a new challenge for the Union, aimed at improving structural policies for the

⁵⁷ The following pieces of information were taken from: A. Rodriguez-Pose, *op. cit.*, p. 49-51.

⁵⁸ A. Rodriguez-Pose, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

⁵⁹ European Commission, *History of the Policy*:
<http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/what/history/> [Accessed: 02/07/2015].

⁶⁰ M. Palumbo, C. Aprile, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

⁶¹ M. Fadda, F. Montemurra, *op. cit.*, p. 24-5.

achievement of economic and social cohesion and aimed at building upon its previous experience in the light of future enlargements.

In conclusion, over time there has been an increased decentralisation of the management responsibilities to local bodies, which now have to prove to be active and innovative entities for local development. What the EU is searching for is an adequate cohesion policy, able to have real effects on its territories and to set out precise priorities and objectives at European, national and regional levels. The achievement of economic and social cohesion is, thus, an ambitious project for the EU, which has to demonstrate itself able to overcome internal difficulties for its citizens and their future.

2.1.3. Regional policy in the programming period 2014-2020

National and regional differences across Europe have always existed; however the recent economic situation is changing the traditional map of disparities, as some nations and regions seem to be making the most of the new economic conditions whereas other areas are declining considerably⁶². In order to overcome territorial imbalances, the Union has introduced the issue of economic, social and territorial cohesion into the TFEU and it has strengthened its regional policy so as to prevent a growing gap between territorial disparities. New tools have been set out, notably the five Structural and Investment Funds for the 2014-2020 programming period devoted to the support of some key sectors such as agriculture, fisheries, tourism and transport and, at the same time, devoted to the success of the Europe 2020 Strategy. The structural and cohesion policies represent, thus, economic levers that are essential to overcome the critical financial and economic situation that Europe is facing nowadays. To fulfil this aim the EU has allocated nearly EUR 352 billion⁶³ to be spent between 2014 and 2020. Regional policy represents, thus, a large chunk of the EU budget for 2014-2020 and the Union's main investment strategy.

For the 2014-2020 programming period three key priorities have been defined: developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation; promoting a greener, more resource-efficient and competitive economy; fostering a high-employment economy through the promotion of social and territorial cohesion⁶⁴. Along with the previous key priorities, there are some important features that characterise the management of structural funds for the 2014-2020 period. First of all, there has been a simplification of procedures and mechanisms due to the criticisms arisen in the previous programming period, claiming that EU cohesion policy was too complex and bureaucratic. Second,

⁶² A. Rodriguez-Pose, *op. cit.*, 2002, p. 35.

⁶³ European Commission, *The European Union explained: Regional Policy*, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

⁶⁴ A. Massot Marti, A.M. Nogueira, I. Popescu, E. Kramer, M. Thomas, P. Soave, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

EU financial resources for the years 2014-2020 shall be spent on a fewer, but more specific thematic objectives: in this way it will be more easy to achieve the Europe 2020 Strategy goals. Third, in order to encourage and increase the use of financial instruments the new policy framework offers greater flexibility to EU countries and their national bodies in terms of target sectors and implementation structures⁶⁵, as they can choose between a wide range of delivering investments and select the most suitable for them. Fourth, another important feature of the management of structural funds in the 2014-2020 period is the increased strategic coherence of cohesion and regional policies, achieved by closer cooperation between EU institutions and Member States' bodies. Indeed, the closer coordination and management between the Union and its Member States is thought to ensure that in the future EU funding will be perfectly in line with national policies. Fifth, an additional challenge for EU regional policy today is to produce measurable results which have concrete effects on the targeted territories and a positive contribution to the Europe 2020 Strategy objectives. To fulfil this aim, *ex ante* and *ex post* indicators and methods, which assess the monitoring, evaluation and impact of funded projects, have been conceived. Consequently, national and local authorities of Member States are asked both to outline the objectives that they want to reach with the available financial resources and to identify precisely how they will measure progress towards the attainment of the established goals. These new conditions shall lead to the fulfilment of three objectives: a bespoke selection of project proposals, which are supposed to tackle a limited number of strategic investment priorities; a careful monitoring once funding is delivered; a concrete analysis of the impact and results of funded projects. This procedure is thought to ensure that EU money is spent properly and it gets to where it is most needed: indeed, through the adoption of clear and measurable targets EU countries and regions can demonstrate their contribution to the achievement of the Europe 2020 Strategy.

In conclusion, due to the beginning of one of the worst economic and financial crises EU regional policy has tried to respond to financial difficulties with flexibility by redirecting funding to where it was most needed and by investing in those sectors that are fundamental for growth and employment. EU development policy can be seen as the most visible expression of European solidarity, and it shall lead to the implementation of a series of reforms aiming at the achievement of the Europe 2020 Strategy goals. These reforms are a crucial step to be made by the Union in order to support its integrity and power: indeed, EU strength comes from its unique capacity to integrate

⁶⁵ European Commission, *Cohesion Policy 2014-2020*, p. 2:

<http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/financial_instruments_en.pdf>
[Accessed: 01/07/2015].

local, regional, national and transnational concerns and performances, and cohesion and regional policies constitute the core of this capacity⁶⁶.

2.2. Structural and Investment Funds: an overview

The European Structural and Investment Funds are five: European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), European Social Fund (ESF), Cohesion Fund (CF), European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF). Their major objectives are: to pursue the Europe 2020 Strategy priorities, to improve coordination between the different regions of the Union, to ensure cohesive implementation and to give access to the funds as directly as possible to those who may benefit from them⁶⁷. The following paragraphs will give an overview of the main features, tasks and goals of the five ESI Funds.

2.2.1. European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)

The EEC Treaty did not establish precise instruments or actions to overcome regional imbalances within the Community. This need manifested openly in the following decades when the European Regional Development Fund was founded (1975). Originally, the Fund was created to support the development of the poorest regions of the United Kingdom and to help them benefit more from the Common Agricultural Policy. However, after the entry of Spain, Portugal and Greece into the Community the competences of the ERDF expanded, as it started focusing on all the underdeveloped and less-favoured regions. Today it represents the main instrument of EU regional policy, as it strengthens economic and social cohesion within the Union by reducing imbalances between regions and supporting their cooperation, with a particular attention to cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation⁶⁸.

In general the ERDF sustains the competitiveness of enterprises (especially of SMEs) and their infrastructure, along with the promotion of research and innovation, gender equality, environmental protection and cooperation between EU regions.⁶⁹ In particular, at the present time the Fund is

⁶⁶ A. Massot Marti, A.M. Nogueira, I. Popescu, E. Kramer, M. Thomas, P. Soave, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

⁶⁷ European Commission, *The ESI Funds*:
<http://ec.europa.eu/contracts_grants/funds_en.htm> [Accessed: 04/07/2015]

⁶⁸ Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on specific provisions for the support from the European Regional Development Fund to the European territorial cooperation goal, OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 7.

⁶⁹ M. Fadda, F. Montemurra, *op. cit.*, p. 130-1.

tackling some specific priorities: innovation and research, digital agenda, support for small and medium-sized enterprises and low-carbon economy. The quantity of ERDF money spent in those fields depends on the region. Indeed, the Commission implementing decision of 18 February 2014 has set out a list of regions eligible for funding from the ERDF for the period 2014-2020, distinguishing between three categories of regions: the less-developed regions, regions under transition and the more-developed regions⁷⁰.

In conclusion, the European Rural Development Fund targets the naturally disadvantaged territories, from declining urban areas to remote, mountainous or sparsely inhabited areas, and it tries to foster their sustainable development and to support strategies directly tackling economic, environmental, social and demographic challenges.

2.2.2. European Social Fund (ESF)

The European Social Fund was established by the EEC Treaty with the purpose of improving working conditions and opportunities, along with good standards of living for workers within the Community. The overall aim was to help less-favoured regions where the lack of a trained workforce was a serious problem, through the strengthening of human resources and their endogenous potential⁷¹.

The ESF has searched for the improvement of working opportunities and professional training through the support a number of issues: sustainable integration into the labour market, gender equality, healthy ageing, self-employment, entrepreneurship and business creation, economic and social cohesion, modernisation of labour market institutions, adaptation of workers and entrepreneurs to change. According to the provisions established for 2014-2020, the Fund shall invest both in European workers, trying to give them more education and working opportunities, and in initiatives improving social inclusion and combating poverty. ESF money is spent across all EU regions, and more than EUR 80 billion is allocated for the enhancement of human capital resources between 2014 and 2020, with some extra funds (EUR 3.2 billion) devoted to the Youth Employment Initiative for the support of youngsters' employment.⁷² Specifically, throughout the 2014-2020 period

⁷⁰ A complete list of the eligible regions can be found in: Commission Implementing Decision of 18 February 2014 setting out the list of regions eligible for funding from the European Regional Development Fund and the European Social Fund and of Member States eligible for funding from the Cohesion Fund for the period 2014-2020 (2014/99/EU), OJ L 50, 20.2.2014, notified under document C(2014) 974, p. 3-12.

⁷¹ A. Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 171.

⁷² The data have been taken from: European Commission, *Social Fund*: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/funding/social-fund/ [Accessed: 04/07/2015].

the ESF focuses on four priorities: promoting employment and labour mobility, fostering social inclusion and combating poverty, investing in education, skills and lifelong learning, and enhancing institutional capacity and public administration.

2.2.3. Cohesion Fund (CF)

The Maastricht Treaty established the Cohesion Fund with the objective of reducing economic and social imbalances and supporting sustainable development. Throughout the years the Fund has provided assistance to projects concerning environmental protection and trans-European networks in the Member States having a per capita gross national income (GNI) less than 90% of the EU average⁷³.

For the 2014-2020 programming period the Fund is subject to the rules laid down in the Common Provisions Regulation, as well as in Regulation (EU) No 1300/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the Cohesion Fund. Between 2014 and 2020 the Fund in question is going to allocate EUR 63.4 billion⁷⁴ to a number of EU countries specifically listed in Annex IV of the Communication implementing decision of 18 February 2014: Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia⁷⁵. Moreover the CF supports the actions concerning the following two fields: trans-European transport networks, especially transport infrastructure projects, and environment, in particular projects linked to energy (for example energy efficiency or renewable energy) or transport (for example rail or public transport). The environmental priority pursued by the CF is sought through investments supporting low-carbon economy, climate change adaptation, environmental protection and resource efficiency, whereas the priority concerning trans-European transport networks aims at promoting sustainable transport, which shall lead to the development of environmentally-friendly, low-noise and low-carbon systems of transport⁷⁶.

⁷³ A. Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 230.

⁷⁴ European Commission, *Cohesion Fund*:
<http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/funding/cohesion-fund/> [Accessed: 04/07/2015].

⁷⁵ The list can be found in Annex IV of Commission Implementing Decision of 18 February 2014, OJ L 50, 20.2.2014, p. 13.

⁷⁶ Regulation (EU) No 1300/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the Cohesion Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1084/2006, OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 3-4.

2.2.4. European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)

Rural areas are an important part of the EU's physical shape: nearly 90% of the territory of the Union is rural, and it is inhabited by more than 56% of the EU's peoples.⁷⁷ On one hand per capita income is lower in rural regions than in urban areas, the skill base is narrower and services are less developed. On the other hand European rural areas have much to offer, not only in terms of resources and raw materials, but they may also contribute to the improvement of the tourism sector and the environment.

The mission of the EAFRD is laid down in Article 3 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013: the Fund shall support the sustainable development of rural areas and shall complements other instruments, such as the CAP, the CFP or the cohesion policy.⁷⁸ Moreover it fosters the competitiveness of Union agricultural sector, which should be balanced from a territorial and environmental point of view and should become more environmentally-friendly and innovative. Finally, the EAFRD contributes to the improvement of the Europe 2020 Strategy and it pursues six specific priorities in relation to rural development: innovation and transfer of know-how and skills in rural areas, more competitive agriculture, promotion of food chain organisation, protection of ecosystems, resource-efficiency and low carbon economy in agriculture, social inclusion and poverty reduction in rural areas⁷⁹.

2.2.5. European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF)

The number of fisheries products has increased over time and is still rising today, but it is also common knowledge that the main problem of fisheries is the poor state of the fish stocks⁸⁰. For this reason, in the 1970s the European Union established the so-called 'Common Fisheries Policy' (CFP). The policy is related to the management of fishing fleets of EU countries and to the preservation of fish species. The rules established by the policy ensure that fishing fleets of all the Member States are granted equal access to EU waters and fishing grounds and regulate fair competition between fishermen. The CFP pursues the enhancement of fisheries and aquaculture since they represent a source of healthy food for EU citizens and assures that they become more environmentally and

⁷⁷ European Commission, *Rural Development 2014-2020*:
<http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rurdev/index_en.htm> [Accessed: 05/07/2015].

⁷⁸ Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005, OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 13.

⁷⁹ Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013, OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 14.

⁸⁰ A. Massot Marti, A.M. Nogueira, I. Popescu, E. Kramer, M. Thomas, P. Soave, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

economically sustainable. Furthermore it implements the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy in the effort to achieve sustainable and inclusive growth for fisheries and aquaculture, cohesion among coastal regions and a better economic performance of the fisheries industry.⁸¹

Between 2014 and 2020 the CFP policy is implemented by the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF). The Fund is thought to promote sustainable fishing and to support a sustainable development of EU coasts by co-financing projects able to enhance the quality of living and employment opportunities in those areas. The EMFF revolves around four main pillars. The first one is called 'Smart Green Fisheries' and it supports the passage to more sustainable fishing and management of the marine ecosystem. The second one is known as 'Smart Green Aquaculture' as it shall promote competitive and green aquaculture. The third pillar, 'Sustainable and Inclusive Territorial Development', aims at protecting and supporting coastal communities depending mostly on fishing, whereas the last one is better known as the 'Integrate Maritime Policy', which pursues sustainable growth.⁸²

2.3. European Structural and Investment Funds Regulations 2014-2020

The Regulations that will be analysed in the next paragraphs constitute the legal base of the five Structural and Investment Funds for the 2014-2020 programming period.

2.3.1. Common Provisions Regulation (CPR)

Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, also known as the 'Common Provisions Regulation', lays down common provisions applicable to the ERDF, the ESF, the CF, the EAFRD and the EMFF, as well as general provisions regarding the ERDF, the ESF, the CF and the EMFF. The Regulation establishes those provisions having regard in particular to Article 177 TFEU, which affirms that the European Parliament and the Council are in charge of defining the tasks, priority objectives and the organisation of the Structural Funds, ensuring at the same time their effectiveness, and they coordinate the functioning of each fund with the others and with additional financial instruments. The CPR is divided into five parts: the first part provides an explanation of the subject-matter and a set of definitions, the second one lays down the provisions that all the five ESI Funds have in

⁸¹ European Commission, *Reform of the Common Fisheries Policy*, COM(2011) 417 final, Brussels, 2011, p. 2.

⁸² Information on the four pillars taken from: A. Massot Marti, A.M. Nogueira, I. Popescu, E. Kramer, M. Thomas, P. Soave, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

common, the third specifies general rules for the ERDF, the ESF, the CF and the EMFF, the fourth set out rules for financial management and control, and the last one contains final provisions.

Part Two of the Common Provisions Regulation is fundamental as it tackles the issue more in detail: it identifies common rules for the ESI Funds, as well as specific rules for the adoption of Partnership Agreements, and it outlines the thematic objectives of the 2014-2020 programming period. As far as common principles are concerned, all the ESI Funds shall deliver, first, the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth; second, the values and objectives pursued by the Treaties including economic, social and territorial cohesion; third, the Europe 2020 Integrated Guidelines and the applicable country-specific recommendations⁸³. The thematic objectives of the ESI Funds for the years 2014-2020 are listed in article 9 of the CPR: research, innovation, technological development, use and quality of ICT, SMEs competitiveness, low-carbon economy, environmental adaptation and protection, sustainable transport and infrastructure, education, lifelong learning, employment, labour mobility, social inclusion and poverty reduction. Furthermore Part Two of the CPR regulates the adoption of Partnership Agreements. According to Article 4 the ESI Funds shall integrate national, regional and local policies to achieve a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth pursued by the Europe 2020 Strategy. To fulfil this aim Member States must cooperate with the Commission and, at the same time, coordinate their regional and local authorities. Member States are asked to prepare a Partnership Agreement in cooperation with the Commission and their regional authorities. The Partnership Agreement, whose content is established in Article 15, must include an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the geographical area in question, an *ex ante* evaluation of the agreement, a list of selected objectives and priorities, the chosen methodology and a summary of the planned actions. Finally, Title III of the Part Two concerns the programming and it establishes that the ESI Funds resources are implemented through the definition of programmes. In accordance with the Partnership Agreement, programmes are supposed to conceive a strategy contributing to the Europe 2020 Strategy and to define clearly the pursued priorities and the financial appropriation.

Part Three of the Common Provisions Regulation lays down general rules applicable to the ERDF, the ESF and the CF. These Funds pursue the Europe 2020 Strategy goals, as well as the objective of social and territorial cohesion in accordance with Article 174 TFEU. In order to achieve this scope

⁸³ Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006, OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 22.

they must implement two actions: 'Investments for growth and jobs' action and 'European territorial cooperation' action. The latter shall be pursued in particular by the ERDF, while the Investment for growth and jobs goal is pursued by all the five ESI Funds in all EU regions (more-developed regions, transition regions and less-developed regions) and implemented through the adoption of operational programmes drawn up at national level with the assistance of the Commission.

Part Four of the CPR establishes general rules applicable to the ESI Funds which concern management and control systems. In particular, Member States designate for each operational programme a national, regional or local public authority or a private body as the managing authority, then another one as the certifying authority and a third one as the audit authority. Managing authorities are responsible, indeed, for the management of the operational programmes and must act in respect to the principles of sound financial management. The audit authority ensures that audits are carried out in line with the functioning of the programme management and control. The audit authority shall work with functional independence, but at the same time it cooperates with the Commission to define audit plans and methods. The certifying authority is in charge of ensuring the completeness, accuracy and authenticity of the accounts and that expense entered in the accounts complies with applicable law and has been used with regard to operations selected for funding in accordance with the criteria established for the operational programme.⁸⁴

2.3.2. ERDF Regulation and ETC Regulation

The European Rural Development Fund is regulated by two legal documents: Regulation (EU) No 1301/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the European Regional Development Fund and on specific provisions concerning the Investment for growth and jobs goal and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006 and Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on specific provisions for the support from the European Regional Development Fund to the European territorial cooperation goal.

Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 establishes the scope of the Fund in relation to the European territorial cooperation goal, whereas Regulation (EU) No 1301/2013 establishes its tasks and its scope with regard to the Investment for growth and jobs goal and the European territorial goal. Both Regulations are based on the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, in particular Articles 178 and 349 TFEU. Article 178 TFEU is part of Title XVIII regarding 'Economic, social and territorial

⁸⁴ Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 82.

cohesion', and it affirms that implementing regulations to the European Rural Development Fund shall be adopted by the European Parliament and the Council, following the ordinary legislative procedure and after the consultation of the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. Furthermore, Regulation (EU) No 1301/2013 is based not only on Article 178 TFEU, but also on Article 349 TFEU. The latter Article allows the Council to adopt specific measures, aimed at supporting territories which are disadvantaged because of a number of different factors (for example remoteness, insularity or climate) and which are prevented from a smooth and straight development. Indeed, Article 349(1) concerns those European areas such as Martinique, Réunion, the Azores or the Canary Islands, whose structural social and economic situation poses some limits to their development due to a number of factors: from remoteness to insularity, small size, climate, economic dependence on a few products. According to Article 349(1) the Council, from a Commission's proposal and after the consultation with the European Parliament, might adopt specific actions with the purpose of laying down the conditions of application of the Treaties to those less-favoured regions.⁸⁵

Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 defines the objectives pursued by the ERDF under the European territorial cooperation goal and it outlines the Member States and regions eligible for financial assistance from the Fund. By pursuing the goal of territorial collaboration the ERDF promotes cooperation between neighbouring regions, interregional cooperation and transnational cooperation. Financial resources for the implementation of territorial cooperation goal are set out in Article 4 of the Regulation in question: those resources amounts to EUR 8 billion and must be allocated in a different manner between cross-border cooperation, transnational cooperation and interregional cooperation (respectively 74,05% for cross-border cooperation, 20,26% for transnational cooperation and 5,59% for interregional cooperation).⁸⁶ Investment priorities supported by the ERDF are described in Article 7: not only does the Fund contribute to the thematic objectives set out in Article 9 of the Common Provisions Regulation and in Article 5 of Regulation (EU) No 1301/2013, but it also supports specific investment priorities for each European territorial cooperation component. The first investment priority is focused on cross-border cooperation, sustainable employment and labour mobility, as well as social inclusion, poverty reduction, education and training. The second investment priority aims at fostering transnational cooperation in support of regional synergies and strategies, which are expected to strengthen the institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders. The third investment priority seek to promote interregional

⁸⁵ Article 349(1), Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

⁸⁶ The amounts and data have been taken from: Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013, OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 8.

cooperation in order to exchange good practices, knowledge and expertise and to support cohesion policies.⁸⁷ Furthermore, the Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 lays down provisions for the establishment of cooperation programmes, which consist of a set of priorities axes and describe the adopted approach having regard to the Partnership Agreement as well as to the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy. Rules concerning the monitoring and evaluation processes and the eligibility criteria for cooperation programmes are defined in Article 14. Managing authorities of Member States must submit to the Commission an annual implementation report monitoring the programme development and evaluating its implementation and contingent progress. Operations under cooperation programmes can take place in the territories that are part of the Union, however third countries can also participate in transnational and interregional programmes under some conditions which must be established in the relevant cooperation programme or, at times, in a specific agreement signed between the Commission, the third country and the Member State managing the cooperation programme in question.

Regulation (EU) No 1301/2013 defines the tasks and the scope of the ERDF, in particular with regard to the 'Growth and jobs' goal. The ERDF seeks to foster economic, social and territorial cohesion by overcoming the major regional imbalances through sustainable growth and structural adjustments.⁸⁸ In order to achieve these objectives the ERDF supports a series of investment priorities aimed at creating the basis for sustainable development. Those priorities are outlined in Article 5 of the Regulation, and they concern investments in research and innovation, access and quality of ICT, competitiveness of SMEs, the shift towards a low-carbon economy, investments in sustainable transport and infrastructure, social inclusion and poverty reduction, sustainable employment. Lastly, Chapter II of the Regulation focuses on some specific provisions concerning particular territorial factors and areas which the ERDF may support, such as urban development, remote areas and territories with demographic problems.

⁸⁷ Information on investment priorities taken from: Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013, OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 9-10.

⁸⁸ Regulation (EU) No 1301/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the European Regional Development Fund and on specific provisions concerning the Investment for growth and jobs goal and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006, OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 4.

2.3.3. ESF Regulation

Regulation (EU) No 1304/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Social Fund was approved on 17th December 2013, and it repealed Council Regulation (EC) No 1081/2006. The Regulation is based on Article 164 TFEU establishing that the European Parliament and the Council, in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure and after the consultation of the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, might adopt implementing regulations relating to the European Social Fund. In particular, Regulation (EU) No 1304/2013 defines the mission of the Fund and the Youth Employment Initiative, their scope and other specific provisions. Article 2(1) of the Regulation highlights the purposes of the ESF: fostering a high level of employment, job quality, education and training, supporting the access of young people into the labour market, as well as combating poverty, achieving social inclusion and promoting gender equality and non-discrimination behaviours. The ESF objectives are described in a more detailed way in Article 3, which lists a number of key investment priorities. The first investment priority aims at the creation of more job opportunities for job-seekers, youngsters and people who have been made redundant and to support self-employment, entrepreneurship, gender equality and healthy ageing. The other investment priorities focus on social inclusion to combat poverty and discriminations, education and training with the aim of reducing school-leaving and improving education systems and the strengthening of institutional capacity of public bodies and stakeholders through the support of more efficient national, regional and local administrations.⁸⁹

Article 4 of the ESF Regulation establishes the principles of ‘consistency’ and ‘thematic concentration’. The former refers to the fact that Member States’ actions must be consistent with the headline targets of the Europe 2020 Strategy regarding employment, education and poverty reduction. The latter lays down two compulsory conditions. First, 20% of the overall ESF resources in each Member State must be spent for the ‘social inclusion, combating poverty and any discriminations’ thematic priority. Second, another established percentage of money, which varies according to the wealth of regions (80% for more developed regions, 70% for transition regions, 60% for less developed regions⁹⁰), must be allocated specifically to four investment priorities laid down in Article 3(1) of the Regulation: employment and labour mobility, social inclusion, education and training and institutional capacity.

⁸⁹ Regulation (EU) No 1304/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the European Social Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1081/2006, OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 5-6.

⁹⁰ Percentages have been taken from: Regulation (EU) No 1304/2013, OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 7.

Finally, the ESF includes an additional initiative called 'Youth Employment Initiative' (YEI), aimed at fighting against youth unemployment. Member States shall define arrangements for the YEI in their Partnership Agreement which could take the form of an operational programme or a priority axis in the context of the operational programme or a part of a priority axis. The ultimate aim of this initiative is to support young people under the age of twenty-five years old (if necessary, the target group can be extended up to the age of thirty by Member States) who are inactive or unemployed.

2.3.4. CF Regulation

Regulation (EU) No 1300/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the Cohesion Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1084/2006 was established with regard to Article 177 TFEU. According to Article 177 TFEU the European Parliament and the Council, following the ordinary legislative procedure and consulting the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, define the tasks, priority objectives and the organisation of the Structural Funds, in order to ensure their effectiveness and coordination one with another as well as with other financial instruments. In addition to this, Article 177 TFEU points out that there must exist a Cohesion Fund providing financial contribution to projects and initiatives in the fields of environment and trans-European networks⁹¹.

Following these provisions, Regulation (EU) No 1300/2013 establishes the Cohesion Fund and its key purposes, notably fostering economic, social and territorial cohesion of the Union and promoting sustainable development. The scope of the Fund is laid down in Article 2 of the Regulation, which draws inspiration from Article 177 TFEU: indeed, it claims that the Fund shall focus on the environment, including sustainable development and energy, and trans-European infrastructure. Article 4 of Regulation (EU) No 1300/2013 defines in a deeper manner what are the six investment priorities of the CF. The first priority concerns the transition towards a low-carbon economy by supporting renewable resources, energy efficiency, effective management and distribution systems of energy, efficient generation of heat and power. The second focuses on climate change adaptation, while the third on preservation and protection of the environment by investing in the fields of waste and water, protecting biodiversity and ecosystems and improving urban areas. The fifth investment priority supports sustainable transport through the creation of a Single European Transport Area and the development of an environmentally-friendly transport

⁹¹ Article 177, Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

infrastructure. The last one pursues the strengthening of national authorities' and stakeholders' institutional capacity.⁹²

Finally, the Regulation specifies some final provisions concerning the exercise of delegation, repeal, review and entry into force; then it outlines in Annex I the common output indicators to be used for the Cohesion Fund.

2.3.5. EAFRD Regulation

Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) was adopted on 17th December 2013, and it repealed Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005. Its legal basis lays on the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, notably Articles 42 and 43(2) which concern the fields of agriculture and fisheries. In particular, Article 42 allows the Council to authorise the grant of aid for enterprises defined as 'handicapped by natural conditions'⁹³. According to Article 43(2), the European Parliament and the Council are asked to establish the necessary provisions in support of the common agricultural policy and the common fisheries policy.

The purpose of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013, as specified in Article 1, is to set out general provisions for actions tackling the development of rural areas, which shall be financed by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development. The Regulation outlines the mission, objectives and priorities pursued by the EAFRD. The Fund contributes to the achievement of the Europe 2020 Strategy goals and must complement the CAP, as well as the cohesion policy and the CFP. Three are its key objectives: fostering a more competitive agricultural sector, ensuring a sustainable management of natural resources and achieving a balanced development of the rural territories of Member States. Lastly, the priorities for rural development pursued by the EAFRD are the following: innovation and knowledge transfer in the agricultural field, competitiveness of agriculture, food chain organisation and animal welfare, protection of the ecosystem, promotion of a more environmentally-friendly agriculture, social inclusion and poverty reduction.⁹⁴

In its Title II the Regulation provides rules for actions implemented by the EAFRD through rural development programmes in order to meet Union priorities for rural development. Each Member State must create either a programme for its territory or a series of programmes conceived for its

⁹² Information on CF investment priorities was taken from: Regulation (EU) No 1300/2013, OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 3-4.

⁹³ Article 42, Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

⁹⁴ The objectives and priorities are listed in: Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013, OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 13-5.

different regions, and those programmes shall include sub-actions addressing specific target groups, such as young farmers, female farmers, small farms or remote mountainous areas. Development programme proposals must be submitted ultimately to the Commission which is entitled of their definitive approval.

Title V of the Regulation establishes financial provisions for the EAFRD: the maximum contribution rate is 85% of the eligible public expense in the less-developed regions, 75% for those regions whose GDP per capita in the period 2007-2013 was less than 75% of the EU GDP per capita average, 63% for the reminder of the transition regions not complying with the above-mentioned provisions, 53% in other regions⁹⁵.

Finally, Title VII concerns the monitoring and evaluation processes, establishing that a common monitoring and evaluation system must be developed in partnership between Member States and the Commission in order to evaluate concrete achievements and changes in rural development and to assess the impact and relevance of such interventions.

2.3.6. EMFF Regulation

Article 1 of the Common Provisions Regulation claims that its established rules must be applied without prejudice not only to the provisions set out in the five EU Structural and Investment Funds Regulations 2014-2020 (the ERDF Regulation, the ESF Regulation, the CF Regulation, the ETC Regulation and the EAFRD Regulation), but also to:

*'a future Union legal act laying down the conditions for the financial support for maritime and fisheries policy for the programming period 2014-2020 (the EMFF Regulation)'*⁹⁶.

A legal act concerning the fisheries policy was, indeed, adopted on 15th May 2014 by the European Parliament and the Council: Regulation (EU) No 508/2014 on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund repealing Council Regulations (EC) No 2328/2003, (EC) No 861/2006, (EC) No 1198/2006, (EC) No 791/2007 and Regulation (EU) No 1255/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council.

The EMFF Regulation establishes the rules and measures for the implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) and the achievement of sustainable development of fisheries and aquaculture areas. According to Article 4 of the Regulation, the EMFF goals are to promote competitive, but also sustainable and responsible fisheries and aquaculture, to support the implementation of the CFP and the IMP (Integrated Maritime Policy) and to promote the development of EU fisheries and

⁹⁵ Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013, OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 41.

⁹⁶ Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 19.

aquaculture areas. On the whole the Fund shall contribute to the Europe 2020 Strategy and the CFP, and in order to fulfil this objective it must focus on specific priorities which are outlined in Article 6. The first key priority pursues the promotion of innovative and responsible fisheries through the protection of ecosystems and biodiversity and the enhancement of innovation, technologies, education and training, as well as of the competitiveness of the fisheries industry. The second key priority focuses on the promotion of sustainable aquaculture, which should be achieved through environmental protection, competitiveness of aquaculture enterprises (in particular of SMEs) and research and technological improvements. In addition to these priorities, the Fund shall implement the CFP, create new job opportunities, foster territorial cohesion, improve market organisation and encourage investment in the fishery and aquaculture industry.⁹⁷

According to Article 7 the EMFF can finance operations following the principles of shared management and direct management. Specifically, the EMFF available budget under shared management consists of EUR 5 749 331 600, while the resources allocated under direct management amount to EUR 647 million⁹⁸. As far as initiatives under shared management are concerned, Member States are asked to conceive a single operational programme made up of a series of actions which shall pursue the Union priorities set out in Article 6. Moreover, the operational programme must contain a detailed analysis of the fisheries state in the concerned Member State identifying their strengths, weaknesses and possible threats, as well as a specific description of the strategy that the State wants to implement. According to Article 19, the Commission is in charge of the approval of operational programmes and, when considered necessary, it may adopt amendments. The types of measures that can be financed under shared management are listed in Title V of the Regulation: from projects introducing new products, techniques or equipment to professional training initiatives, the creation of networks or associations between scientific bodies and fishermen, support for young fishermen, funds for unpredictable environmental events, etc.

Taking into account measures under direct management, the Commission often adopts implementing acts laying down annual work programmes in accordance with the objectives and priorities set out in the Regulation. Annual work programmes shall contain a description of the activities to be pursued, the amount of allocated grants and the evaluation criteria. Measures financed under direct management have the objective of implementing the EU Integrated Maritime

⁹⁷ Regulation (EU) No 508/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 May 2014 on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulations (EC) No 2328/2003, (EC) No 861/2006, (EC) No 1198/2006, (EC) No 791/2007 and Regulation (EU) No 1255/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council, OJ L 149, 20.5.2014, p. 14.

⁹⁸ Data taken from: Regulation (EU) No 508/2014, OJ L 149, 20.5.2014, p. 17.

Policy directly through cooperation and dialogue between Member States, stakeholders and civil society. The eligible actions financed under direct management are listed in Article 83 of the Regulation and they can be, for example, studies, awareness-raising campaigns, share of best practices, information-sharing networks or training projects.

3. Funds managed directly by the European Commission

Along with structural funds there exist other funds that are managed directly by the European Union. As described in paragraph 1.2.3., there are two types of direct funds: contracts and grants. The former are contracts used by the Union to buy services, goods or other specific works and delivered through 'calls for tender'. The latter, on which we will concentrate in this section, are grants for projects financed within EU funding programmes which are, in turn, related to precise EU policies. In the following paragraphs a closer look to direct funding will be taken through the analysis of the key features of EU grants and the description of EU main funding programmes existing for the 2014-2020 programming period (Erasmus+, Horizon 2020, COSME 2014-2020 and LIFE 2014-2020).

3.1. Overview

The European Commission makes direct financial contributions in the form of grants in support of projects which support the general interests and policies of the Union. These projects contribute to the implementation of EU funding programmes which are established for a given period of time (the present programming period has started in 2014 and will last until 2020). The general aim of direct funding is, therefore, to implement and further EU policies and to achieve the established priorities pursued by the Europe 2020 Strategy, as well as the objectives defined in Article 3 of the Treaty on European Union⁹⁹.

⁹⁹ Article 3 TEU: '1. The Union's aim is to promote peace, its values and the well-being of its peoples. 2. The Union shall offer its citizens an area of freedom, security and justice without internal frontiers. 3. The Union shall establish an internal market. It shall promote scientific and technological advance. It shall combat social exclusion and discrimination, and shall promote social justice and protection, equality between women and men, solidarity between generations and protection of the rights of the child. It shall promote economic, social and territorial cohesion, and solidarity among Member States. It shall respect its rich cultural and linguistic diversity, and shall ensure that Europe's cultural heritage is safeguarded and enhanced. 4. The Union shall establish an economic and monetary union whose currency is the euro. 5. In its relations with the wider world, the Union shall uphold and promote its values and interests and contribute to the protection of its citizens. It shall contribute to peace, security, the sustainable development of the Earth, solidarity and mutual respect among peoples, free and fair trade, eradication of poverty and the protection of human rights, in particular the rights of the child, as well as to the strict observance and the development of international law, including respect for the principles of the United Nations Charter.'

In order to achieve this, EU grants finance projects which must be coherent both with EU policies and with the real needs of specific target groups; moreover, they must be feasible actions, able to implement concrete and measurable objectives¹⁰⁰. The current programming period for the years 2014-2020 is, in fact, more focused on financing initiatives aimed at achieving tangible results and generating measurable changes. To give a credible contribute at local, national and European level a project must be monitored and evaluated during its whole lifecycle so as to measure its step-by-step results and to estimate its real contribution for EU citizens. The importance of this approach has also been recognised in Italy, in particular by former Italian Minister for Territorial Cohesion Fabrizio Barca¹⁰¹. In the document '*Metodi e obiettivi per un uso efficace dei fondi comunitari 2014-2020*' Barca claims that at the present time it is fundamental to invest in EU territories through public actions. To fulfil this aim the results of public actions and investments must be as clear as possible, in order to be noticeable both from the people responsible for their implementation and from beneficiaries. According to Barca, EU investment is successful only when the results and impact to be achieved are identified even before having chosen which actions need to be financed and put into practice.¹⁰²

3.2. Main Funding Programmes

A complete list¹⁰³ of all EU funding programmes, divided according to the issues they tackle, is available on the website of the European Commission. As said before, the programmes include a wide range of sectors, from education, training and youth (Erasmus+) to SMEs competitiveness (COSME), media and audiovisual tools (Creative Europe), democratic and civic engagement (Europe for Citizens), environment (LIFE), combat of counterfeiting and related fraud (PERICLE 2020), justice (Justice Programme 2014-2020), tax policy (FISCALIS 2020), etc. The following paragraphs will focus on the major and most known EU funding programmes, that is Erasmus+, Horizon 2020, COSME 2014-2020 and LIFE 2014-2020, while Chapter III will be devoted to the development of a case study concerning the Europe for Citizens Programme.

¹⁰⁰ M. D'Amico, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

¹⁰¹ F. Barca was the Italian Minister for Territorial Cohesion during Mario Monti's government.

¹⁰² References to Barca' opinions have been taken from the following document: F. Barca, *Metodi e obiettivi per un uso efficace dei fondi comunitari 2014-2020*, Roma, 2012, p. 5.

¹⁰³ A full list of EU funding programmes is available from: European Commission, *Grants* <http://ec.europa.eu/contracts_grants/grants_en.htm> [Accessed: 13/07/2015].

3.2.1. Erasmus+

Starting from the mid-1980s the Community began to adopt several programmes in the field of education, and along with these programmes, such as Comett, Socrates, Leonardo Da Vinci, Tempus, there was already the Erasmus Programme¹⁰⁴. From its beginning in 1987 Erasmus has always offered university students the possibility of studying in another European country and testing themselves with a new higher education system. Over the years the programme has significantly changed, and its latest version, called 'Erasmus+' and established by Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013, is the result of the integration of the past education programmes implemented during the years 2007-2013: the Lifelong Learning Programme, the Youth in Action Programme, the Erasmus Mundus Programme, Tempus, Alfa, Edulink and Programmes of cooperation with industrialised countries in the field of higher education¹⁰⁵.

Erasmus+ goes beyond the old programmes by promoting synergies in the different fields of education, training, sport and youth, and it is said to be a more effective tool able to address the real needs in terms of human and social capital development across Europe¹⁰⁶. The financial resources allocated for Erasmus+ have the purpose of creating technical skills, knowledge and innovation through the exploitation of education and training channels. By establishing a budget of EUR 14 774 524 000¹⁰⁷ for Erasmus+, indeed the Union has clearly decided to invest a considerable part of its own resources on the improvement of new education and training systems which represent the basis for a stronger and more competitive Europe.

3.2.1.1. Legal basis

The Erasmus+ Programme was established on 11th December 2013 by the Regulation No 1288/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council, whose legal base can be traced back to Title XII of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union concerning education, vocational training, youth and sport. Indeed, as claimed by Article 165(1) TFEU:

¹⁰⁴ M. Niedobitek, *The Cultural Dimension in EC Law*, London, Kluwer Law International, 1997, p. 125.

¹⁰⁵ Erasmus Portal: <http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus_en> [Accessed: 12/07/2015].

¹⁰⁶ Erasmus+ Programme Guide, p. 10 : <http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/documents/erasmus-plus-programme-guide_en.pdf> [Accessed: 19/07/2015].

¹⁰⁷ Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013 of the European Parliament and the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing 'Erasmus+', OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 12.

*'the Union shall contribute to quality education by encouraging cooperation between Member States and, when necessary, by supporting and completing their actions, and shall contribute to the promotion of European sporting issues'*¹⁰⁸.

This objective can be achieved through several methods, as specified in the second paragraph of Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013: by supporting the teaching and dissemination of the Member States' languages; by encouraging the mobility of young people and teachers; by exchanging information, knowledge and experience; by putting emphasis on sport which is equally important for the development of the European dimension.

In particular, the legal basis of the Regulation establishing Erasmus+ lays on the fourth paragraph of Article 165 TFEU and on the fourth paragraphs of Article 166 TFEU. The former allows the European Parliament and the Council, following the ordinary legislative procedure and with the consultation of the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, to adopt additional measures in the sector of education, training and sport¹⁰⁹. The latter claims that the Union is in charge of the implementation of a vocational training policy complementing and supporting Member States' actions in order to foster cooperation in the training field, to facilitate access to vocational training and to exchange information, knowledge and experience. The European Parliament and the Council shall adopt measures to achieve the above-mentioned objectives and the Council, on a proposal from the Commission, shall also adopt recommendations.

According to the provisions set out in Articles 165(4) and 166(4), with Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013 the Union established a specific programme for the years 2014-2020 in the sectors of education, training, youth and sport, that is Erasmus+. The Regulation in question provides all the necessary rules for the management and implementation of the programme. The following paragraphs will tackle these issues by providing a portrayal of Erasmus+ key features and purposes.

3.2.1.2. Features and objectives of the programme

Erasmus+ is a EU Programme focused on the fields of education, training, youth and sport for the period 2014-2020, with an indicative financial budget of EUR 14 billion. The European Commission is the ultimate supervisor of the Programme, as it manages the budget and controls the programme implementation. In particular, the European Commission's Education, Audiovisual and Cultural Executive Agency (EACEA) is responsible for the monitoring of the complete life-cycle management

¹⁰⁸ Article 165, Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

¹⁰⁹ Article 165(4), Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

of Erasmus+. Along with the European institutions in each Member State there exist one or more national Agencies (in Italy the Agency is 'INDIRE') that manage and implement the programme at a national level.

When we consider the eligibility criteria for participation in the Erasmus+ Programme, it is fundamental to remember that, even though individuals constitute the main target population of the programme, Erasmus+ reaches these people only through organisations, institutions or bodies that implement such actions¹¹⁰. Therefore it must be distinguished between participating organisations and participants. Participating organisations are defined in Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013 as public or private bodies involved in the fields of education, training, youth and grassroots sport¹¹¹, whereas participants are the individuals that participate directly into the activities of Erasmus+ funded projects, and they can be students, both adult and young learners, teachers, professors, trainers. It is important to highlight that Erasmus+ projects are managed only by participating organisations which represent the participants and are the direct beneficiaries of the Erasmus+ grants.

Erasmus+ supports a number of activities exploiting the potential of human and social capital in the EU to increase opportunities for cooperation and mobility in the fields of higher education, training, youth and sport. The actions financed by the programme are in line with the Europe 2020 Strategy and its flagship initiatives, especially 'Youth on the move' and 'Agenda for new skills and jobs'. The Regulation establishing Erasmus+ sets out in Articles 4 and 5 the general and specific objectives of the programme. As far as the general objectives are concerned, Erasmus+ aims at achieving the goals of the Europe 2020 Strategy, including the headline target concerning the field of education, and those of the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training. Furthermore the programme pursues the sustainable enhancement of Partner Countries in the field of higher education and training, as well as the strengthening of a European dimension in sport. It also aims at attaining the objectives of the renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2014-2018) and promoting Union's values established in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union¹¹², such as human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men.

¹¹⁰ Erasmus+ Programme Guide, p. 23:
<http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/documents/erasmus-plus-programme-guide_en.pdf>
[Accessed : 19/07/2015].

¹¹¹ Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013, OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 15.

¹¹² Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013, OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 8.

In article 5 the Regulation goes further by identifying the specific objectives of the Erasmus+ Programme. The first pursued objectives are the improvement of competences and skills, especially those relevant for the labour market, and the support of innovation excellence and quality improvements at the level of education and training institutions. In addition Erasmus+ fosters a lifelong learning Union and an international dimension of education and training, able to stimulate the modernisation of education and training systems, as well as the improvement of the teaching and learning of foreign languages and the promotion of excellence in teaching and research activities thanks to Jean Monnet actions.

3.2.1.2. Key actions and specific actions

The Erasmus+ Programme revolves around three key Actions (Learning mobility of individuals; Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices; Support for policy reform) and two specific activities (Jean Monnet Activities and Sport).

The first key Activity is described in Article 7 of the Regulation 1288/2013, and it encompasses the mobility of students and staff, Erasmus+ Master Degree Loans and Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees, that is high-level study programmes offered by groups of higher education institutions that award scholarships to the most talented master students worldwide¹¹³. Key Action 2 supports both strategic partnerships between organisations involved in education and training and partnerships that have the potential for becoming strategic alliances or sector skills alliances. Moreover, it promotes capacity building projects which are transnational cooperation projects based on the partnership between Partner Countries, with the overall purpose of supporting modernisation and internationalisation of education and youth sectors. Lastly, Key Action 3 supports policy reform through the share of knowledge in the fields of education, training and youth and through initiatives for policy innovation, as well as the support to European policy tools and the promotion of stakeholder dialogue and of cooperation with international organisations.

Along with the Key Actions there are two more specific initiatives: Jean Monnet and Sport. Jean Monnet activities promote teaching and research on European integration studies through academic modules, chairs, centres of excellence, policy debate, as well as by supporting institutions and associations, studies and conferences. Actions in the field of sport support collaborative partnerships, non-for-profit European sport events, dialogue with stakeholders and a number of studies, surveys, data gathering, conferences to spread good practices in the field of sport. Such actions have the

¹¹³ Erasmus+ Programme Guide, p. 15 :

<http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/documents/erasmus-plus-programme-guide_en.pdf>
[Accessed: 19/07/2015].

ultimate aim of encouraging participation in healthy physical activities and the integrity of sport by combating doping, violence, intolerance and discrimination¹¹⁴.

3.2.2. Horizon 2020

Horizon 2020 is a EU programme for research and innovation with a remarkable budget of EUR 80 billion. It is a financial instrument devoted to the implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy, in particular of the flagship initiative that is called 'Innovation Union' aimed at generating innovation and improving conditions and access to finance for research and development. By coupling research and innovation, Horizon 2020 pursues excellent science, industrial leadership and tackles societal challenges¹¹⁵, with the ultimate goal of ensuring world-class science in Europe.

3.2.2.1. H2020 legal documents

This paragraph provides an overview of all legal texts relevant to Horizon 2020¹¹⁶. First, it focuses on Regulation (EU) No 1291/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing Horizon 2020 – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020). Second, it analyses Regulation (EU) No 1290/2013 of the European Parliament and the Council of 11 December 2013 laying down the rules for participation and dissemination in 'Horizon 2020 – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020)'. Finally, it takes into account other two legal texts: Council Regulation (EURATOM) No 1314/2013 of 16 December 2013 on the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2014-2018) complementing the Horizon 2020 Framework Programme for Research and Innovation and Council Decision of 3 December 2013 (2013/743/EU) establishing the specific programme implementing Horizon 2020 – the Framework Programme for Research and innovation (2014-2020).

Regulation (EU) No 1291/2013 establishes the Horizon 2020 Programme and defines the framework managing Union support for research and innovation activities. Its legal basis can be traced back to Articles 173(3) and 182(1) TFEU. Article 173(3) TFEU affirms that the Union shall achieve the necessary conditions for the competitiveness of Union industry through the

¹¹⁴ Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013, OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 11.

¹¹⁵ Horizon 2020 Portal:
<<http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/what-horizon-2020>> [Accessed: 13/07/2015].

¹¹⁶ The legal texts can be found on the Horizon 2020 Participant Portal:
<http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/funding/reference_docs.html#h2020-legal-basis-sp> [Accessed: 13/07/2015].

implementation of specific measures, capable to support Member States' initiatives. Article 182(1) TFEU establishes the adoption of a multiannual framework programme to implement actions in the scientific and technological fields and to define the budget and the rules for Union financial participation in the framework programme. The Regulation (EU) No 1291/2013 sets out general provisions for Horizon 2020, specifying the priorities, general objectives and budget. Attached to the Regulation there are two Annexes deepening the description of the programme activities and objectives and defining the exact resource allocation for H2020 actions.

Regulation (EU) No 1290/2013 sets out the rules for participation, as well as for exploitation and dissemination of results in indirect activities realised under Regulation (EU) No 1291/2013, including participation in initiatives financed by funding bodies in accordance with Article 9(2) of that Regulation.¹¹⁷ Its legal basis lays on the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, especially on Articles 173, 183 and 188(2). According to Article 173 TFEU, the Union ensures the necessary conditions for the EU industry competitiveness through any useful policy, initiative or action: the Horizon 2020 is, indeed, an example of Union action for the improvement of research and innovation. Moreover the EU is asked to adopt a multiannual financial framework programme establishing Union efforts in research and technological development, and to pursue its efficient execution and implementation. Regulation (EU) No 1290/2013 addresses the Horizon 2020 Programme in a more practical way by identifying a set of technical issues. The first issue is participation, that is to say the whole process of selection of H2020 projects, from the conditions for participation to proposals, eligibility for funding, evaluation and award criteria. The second issue refers to the funding rules and financial aspects for H2020 projects, for example eligibility of costs, direct and indirect costs. Finally, another important issue is the rules governing the exploitation and dissemination of results: the Regulation, in fact, claims that participants should make efforts to exploit the results they own, or to have them exploited by another legal entity¹¹⁸.

Along with the two previous Regulations it must quoted Council Regulation (EURATOM) No 1314/2013 of 16 December 2013 on the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2014-2018), which complements the Horizon 2020 Programme. Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Atomic Energy Community, in particular the first paragraph of

¹¹⁷ Regulation (EU) No 1290/2013 of the European Parliament and the Council of 11 December 2013 laying down the rules for participation and dissemination in 'Horizon 2020 – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020)' and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1906/2006, OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, Article 1(1), p. 5.

¹¹⁸ Regulation (EU) No 1291/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing Horizon 2020 – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020), OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 18.

Article 7¹¹⁹, the Council has established the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community for the period 2014-2018 and it has laid down the rules for participation not only in that Programme, but also in the activities conducted jointly under this Regulation and under the Horizon 2020 Programme¹²⁰. In fact, the Euratom Programme shall be implemented through ‘cross-cutting activities’ able to address those challenges and purposes common to the Horizon 2020 Programme.

Lastly, it must be remembered Council Decision of 3 December 2013 (2013/743/EU) establishing the specific programme that implements Regulation (EU) No 1291/2013. The Decision identifies the objectives in support of the research and innovation activities laid down in Article 1 of the latter Regulation¹²¹, as well as the rules for its implementation. The specific programme takes into account the different Parts that compose Horizon 2020: Excellent Science, Industrial Leadership, Societal Challenges, Spreading excellence and widening participation, Science with and for society, and Non-nuclear direct actions of the joint Research Centre (JRC). Each Part presents different branches that pursue their own specific objectives: a closer look at the structure of the Horizon 2020 Programme will be taken in the following paragraph.

3.2.2.2. Structure of the programme

Regulation (EU) No 1291/2013 establishing Horizon 2020 sets out the key objective of the Programme: to stimulate innovation and research development across the Union and, consequently, to reach the targets pursued by the Europe 2020 Strategy, especially that of 3% of GDP for research and development by the year 2020. The general objective of Horizon 2020 is implemented through three priorities (Excellent Science, Industrial Leadership and Societal Challenges) and through the

¹¹⁹ According to Article 7(1) of the Treaty establishing the European Atomic Energy Community: ‘Community research and training programmes shall be determined by the Council, acting unanimously on a proposal from the Commission, which shall consult the Scientific and Technical Committee’.

¹²⁰ Council Regulation (EURATOM) No 1314/2013 of 16 December 2013 on the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2014-2018) complementing the Horizon Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 5.

¹²¹ Article 1 of Regulation (EU) No 1291/2013: ‘This Regulation establishes Horizon 2020 – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020) and determines the framework governing Union support to research and innovation activities, thereby strengthening the European scientific and technological base and fostering benefits for society as well as better exploitation of the economic and industrial potential of policies of innovation, research and technological development’.

focus on a range of different areas, from social sciences and humanities to interdisciplinary research, gender equality, international cooperation, climate change and sustainable development¹²².

Horizon 2020 is composed of the three above-mentioned pillars and other cross-cutting objectives (for example Spreading excellence & widening participation or Science with and for society). The first pillar, Excellent Science, promotes the training and work of the most talented research scientists across Europe and it fosters the development of emerging technologies and infrastructure. This type of financing can be awarded through four projects: European Research Council (ERC), Future and Emerging Technologies, Marie Curie Actions and Research Infrastructures. The Industrial Leadership pillar aims at attracting strategic investment in key technologies, as well as more private investment into R&I, and it also supports innovative SMEs across Europe. Industrial Leadership contains three measures right inside: Leadership in enabling and industrial technology, Access to risk finance and Innovation in SMEs. Finally, the Societal Challenges pillar shows a top-down approach by fostering cooperation projects in a range of different fields: health, demographic change and wellbeing, food security, sustainable agriculture and bio-economy, energy security, climate action and resource efficiency and security societies.

¹²² Horizon 2020 Work Programme 2014-2015, p. 16-9:
< http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/wp/2014_2015/main/h2020-wp1415-intro_en.pdf > [Accessed: 15/07/2015].

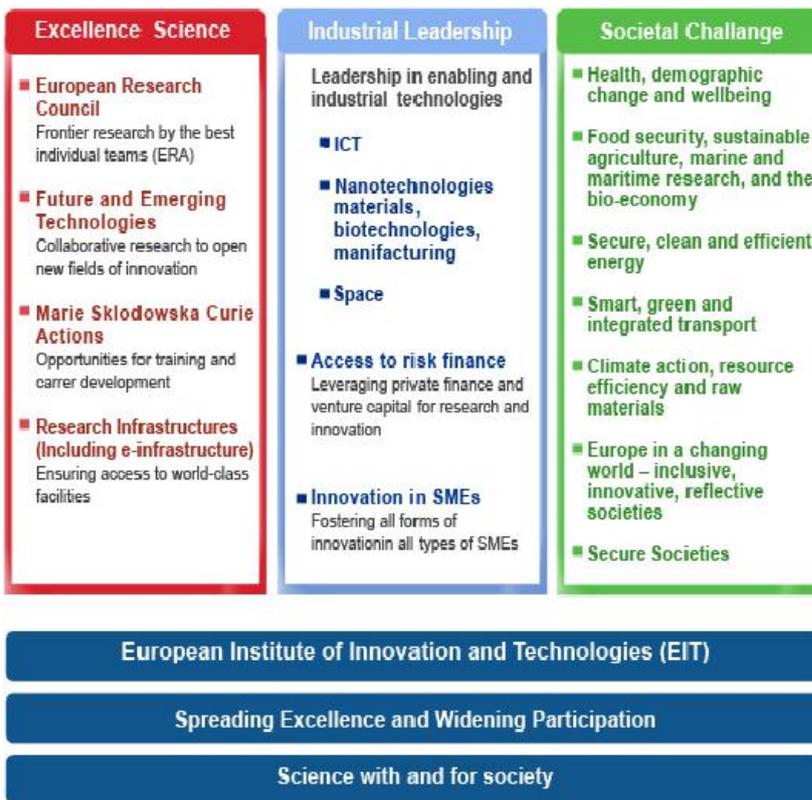


Figure 4. - Structure of Horizon 2020¹²³

Through these actions the Union hopes to enhance innovation, research and technology among its Member States so as to overcome the difficulties arisen in the current period of economic and financial crisis. The crisis has generated structural weaknesses, but the spread of knowledge, new technologies and innovations can turn these challenges into valuable opportunities. Europe owns an untapped potential for its economy to be more innovative and productive, and this potential shall be boosted also thanks to H2020 investments and projects supporting European efficiency, innovation and competitiveness.

3.2.3. COSME 2014-2020

COSME is the EU programme for small and medium-sized enterprises for the years 2014-2020 with an indicative budget of EUR 2.3 billion¹²⁴. Its main goal is to strengthen both the competitiveness of European SMEs and the entrepreneurial culture across the Union. The programme pursues the Europe 2020 Strategy, focusing in particular on the flagship initiative known as 'An industrial policy

¹²³ Table taken from: APRE – Horizon 2020, <<http://www.apre.it/ricerca-europea/horizon-2020/>> [Accessed: 15/07/2015].

¹²⁴ COSME Portal: <http://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/cosme/index_en.htm> [Accessed: 16/07/2015].

for the globalization era'. To achieve this COSME acts on four issues: access to finance for SMEs which means having easier access to guarantees, loans and capitals; access to markets within the Union and beyond European borders; entrepreneurs' support (especially women and young people) by providing them with new education opportunities, entrepreneurial guidance and other support services; the improvement of business conditions by reducing administrative and regulatory obstacles and, consequently, creating a more business-friendly environment¹²⁵.

3.2.3.1. COSME Regulation

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Articles 173 and 195, the Regulation (EU) No 1287/2013 establishes a programme for the competitiveness of enterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises (COSME) for the period 2014-2020. According to Article 173 TFEU, the Union and the Member States are in charge of creating the needed conditions to enhance the competitiveness of Union industry: for example through the adjustment of industry to structural changes, cooperation among enterprises, innovation and research development and the promotion of an environment able to support the development of undertakings across the Union. To establish these conditions the Union pursues the implementation of specific policies and measures complementing Member States' initiatives. Along with Article 173 TFEU that focuses on industry, Article 195 TFEU concerns the tourism sector and claims that the Union shall complement Member States' actions in the tourism field by promoting the competitiveness of industries in that sector, as well as cooperation and exchange of good practices.

The general objective of COSME is laid down in Article 3 of its Regulation, establishing that the programme shall pay specific attention to the needs of SMEs that are located in the Union and in third countries¹²⁶. In Chapter II the Regulation addresses the programme in a deeper manner, identifying the specific fields of action (access to finance, access to markets, improvement framework conditions and promotion of entrepreneurship), the budget and the participation of third countries. In the end Chapters IV and V establish financial provisions, forms of financial assistance and other final rules.

The provisions for COSME 2014-2020 laid down in the Regulation are further complemented by another document, which is Commission Implementing Decision of 29 October 2014 on the adoption

¹²⁵ COSME Portal:

<http://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/cosme/index_en.htm> [Accessed: 16/07/2015].

¹²⁶ Regulation (EU) No 1287/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing a Programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises (COSME) (2014-2020) and repealing Decision No 1639/2006/EC, OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 6.

of the work programme for 2015 and the financing for the implementation of COSME. The Decision adopts the 2015 annual work programme and establishes the overall budget of EUR 276 million¹²⁷ to be spent for that year. The work programme defines how COSME key actions (access to finance, access to markets, framework conditions for enterprises and entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial culture) are articulated for 2015: under each action there are set out specific initiatives to be put into practice and to be financed throughout the year, followed by a detailed description of their objectives, expected results, indicators and methods of implementation.

3.2.3.2. Actions supporting SMEs

As stated in the previous paragraph, COSME consists of a range of actions improving the competitiveness of European enterprises, especially the small and medium-sized ones. The first action, which is called access to finance, has to be complementary to the provisions set out by cohesion policy, Horizon 2020 Programme and national and regional policies of EU countries. Access to finance might entail seed funding, angel funding and quasi-equity financing subject to market demand and it has the goal to improve access to finance for SMEs in the form of equity and debt¹²⁸. The financial instruments that guarantee access to finance for SMEs are outlined in Articles 18 and 19 of the COSME Regulation: Article 18 defines the 'Equity Facility for Growth' instrument while Article 19 specifies provisions for the 'Loan Guarantee Facility'. The Equity Facility for Growth is conceived as an equity financial instrument supporting EU enterprises' growth, research and innovation. The Loan Guarantee Facility includes guarantees and risk sharing arrangements which are supposed to reduce problems and difficulties that SMEs face in accessing finance. For the year 2015, the 'Equity Facility for Growth' and 'Loan Guarantee Facility' tools are financed with a budget of nearly EUR 163 million¹²⁹.

Another instrument used by COSME to promote the competitiveness of SMEs is access to markets, providing specific measures to facilitate SMEs access to both internal and external markets. The initiatives pursuing this goal may include information provision and awareness-raising in relation to EU programmes, law and standards. A specific action that is thought to increase opportunities in

¹²⁷ Commission Implementing Decision of 29 October 2014 adopting the work programme for 2015 and the financing for the implementation of the Programme for Competitiveness of Enterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises, C(2014) 8044 final, 29.10.2014, p. 3.

¹²⁸ Regulation (EU) No 1287/2013, OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 7.

¹²⁹ COSME Work Programme 2015, p. 6:
<file:///C:/Users/Utente/Downloads/COSME%20WP%202015%20(1).pdf> [Accessed: 16/07/2015].

internal and external markets is the so-called 'Enterprise Europe Network', whose key features are laid down in Article 10 of the Regulation. The aim of the Enterprise Europe Network is to provide SMEs with a range of information and advisory services that go from information on EU funding opportunities and funding programmes (especially Horizon 2020) to communication channels between SMEs and the European Commission or support of knowledge transfer and innovation partnerships.

COSME also supports actions creating the necessary conditions for the competitiveness and sustainability of undertakings, in particular small and medium-sized undertakings, in all sectors including the tourism one. The key instrument for the achievement of those framework conditions is the reduction of administrative and regulatory burdens. Unnecessary administrative and regulatory obstacles may be reduced through the development of specific policies able to improve cooperation between policy makers, stakeholders' involvement, exchange of good practices among Member States.

Finally, the COSME Programme aims at promoting entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial culture: the development of a friendly-business atmosphere is fundamental for SMEs, as well as the strengthening of entrepreneurs' know-how, skills and attitudes. In this context, as Article 12(2) of the COSME Regulation highlights, the potential of some specific target groups, notably female and young entrepreneurs, must be nurtured across time. The Work Programme for the year 2015 has set out a number of useful initiatives under this specific objective: indeed, the strengthening of the position of women and youngsters in the entrepreneurial context is seen as a key step for increased European competitiveness and innovation. One of the new initiatives developed by the 2015 COSME Work Programme is 'Erasmus for young entrepreneurs', offering them a unique opportunity to build new skills and to learn from the work of host entrepreneurs on concrete business projects. Another interesting project is the creation of a European on-line e-platform for female entrepreneurs for the period 2016-2018 that would serve as a tool to exchange good practices and to foster the interest of women of all age and business sectors.

3.2.4. LIFE 2014-2020

The European Union had not paid real attention to the state of the environment until 1974, when, at the 1972 Paris Summit, the European Council recognised for the first time that economy had to be put in relation to citizens' quality of life and to the environmental protection¹³⁰. Since the mid-1970s a series of EU programmes concerning the environment were created, but it was only after the Single

¹³⁰ P.S. Graglia, *L'Unione Europea*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2002, p. 95.

European Act that the Union started to develop a proper environmental policy. Nowadays the key instrument for the implementation of EU environmental policy is the LIFE programme, founded in 1992 and financing actions for the environment and climate.

3.2.4.1. LIFE Regulation

LIFE is the EU programme for the environment and climate action for the period 2014-2020. It has a series of key objectives to achieve: the development of a more resource-efficient and low-carbon economy, the improvement of EU environmental policies and the support of environmental governance, including civil society, regional and local actors and NGOs. The available budget for LIFE consists of EUR 3 billion¹³¹, and the beneficiaries can be both public and private organisms.

The programme for the 2014-2020 period has been established by the Regulation (EU) No 1293/2013. The legal basis of the Regulation emerges from the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Article 192 which is part of Title XX concerning the environment. According to Article 192(1) TFEU, the European Parliament and the Council decide the type of action that needs to be taken in order to achieve the objectives referred to in Article 191, such as environmental protection, protection of human health, the combat of climate change, the promotion of a rational use of natural resources. Moreover, in accordance with Article 192(3) TFEU, the European Parliament and the Council may also adopt general action programmes with regard to the EU environment policy. This is the case of the LIFE Programme. Indeed, LIFE finances actions in the form of grants (for example pilot projects, best practice projects, information projects, capacity-building projects), public procurement contracts, contributions to financial instruments and any other tools to sustain a more eco-friendly Union. In accordance with Article 22 of the Regulation (EU) No 1293/2013, it may also finance further activities implemented by the Commission which may include awareness and information campaigns, studies and surveys, workshops, conferences and meetings or networking platforms. Lastly, according to Article 24, the provisions set out in the Regulation should be implemented by the adoption of two multiannual work programmes: the first one covers four years and the second one the remaining three years. Work programmes must be obviously in line with the general objectives and sub-programmes of the LIFE Programme. Moreover they shall allocate the available funds within the two sub-programmes for the covered period of time, they shall establish both the timetable for LIFE calls for proposals and the established rules for the selection and evaluation process.

¹³¹ Regulation (EU) No 1293/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing a Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE) and repealing Regulation (EC) No 614/2007. OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 9.

3.2.4.2. Two sub-programmes for LIFE 2014-2020

LIFE 2014-2020 is composed of two sub-programmes: the sub-programme for Environment and the sub-programme for Climate Action, both offering a unique opportunity to implement EU's environment and climate legislation. Each sub-programme pursues specific actions. The sub-programme for Environment is based on the achievement of three key priorities: Environment and Resource Efficiency, Nature and Biodiversity and Environmental Governance and Information. The sub-programme for Climate is based on other three priority areas: Climate Change Mitigation, Climate Change Adaptation and Climate Governance and Information.

More in detail, the first priority area of the sub-programme for Environment ('Environment and Resource Efficiency') is focused on the development of new approaches, solutions and technologies to face environmental challenges and to implement environment policies and legislation. The second priority area, 'Nature and Biodiversity', is asked to implement EU policies and legislation concerning biodiversity and to combat those factors that have a negative effect on nature and biodiversity within the Union and beyond EU borders. The 'Environmental Governance and Information' priority aims to raise awareness on environmental problems and sustainable development by deepening the involvement of environmental governance, including NGOs and stakeholders.

The sub-programme for Climate, through its priority areas, contributes to the evolution of the Union into a low-carbon society, which is a fundamental aspect of the Europe 2020 climate and energy package¹³². The first priority areas, 'Climate Change Mitigation', pursues effective climate change mitigation initiatives so as to implement Union law and to achieve innovative changes in climate mitigation technologies. The second priority, 'Climate Change Adaptation', helps to build a more climate resilient Europe. Lastly, the 'Climate Governance and Information' action aims at raising awareness on climate issues and sustainable development: this can be achieved through the dissemination of information, knowledge and best practices regarding climate, knowledge sharing and cooperation platforms.

3.3. Applying for funding

EU funding supports projects and organisations that pursue the interests of the European Union and the attainment of specific objectives linked to EU funding programmes, as well as to EU policies and the Europe 2020 Strategy. Due to the latest economic and financial crisis that has posed several challenges and created structural weaknesses, the Union has adopted a bottom-up approach which aims at putting together the efforts of EU institutions with the ones of Member States' public and

¹³² Commission Implementing Decision of 19 March 2014 adopting the LIFE multiannual work programme for 2014-17 (2014/203/EU), OJ L 116, 17.4.2014, p. 20.

private organisations to put forward a set of new solutions and instruments with the purpose of overcoming the present difficult situation. Therefore, when European organisms realise initiatives supported by EU direct funding, it means that they use EU resources to achieve specific objectives integrated in EU policies, in particular in the Europe 2020 Strategy. In order to apply for funding there are three key steps to be followed: to form a partnership with smart and innovative ideas, to apply for a precise call of proposals and to prepare and submit all the documents requested to applicants. The following paragraphs will tackle the above-mentioned issues more in detail.

3.3.1. Partnership

Partnership has become an essential feature of projects and actions funded by the European Commission¹³³, as it is a fundamental resource not only for the development of a good project, but also for the support of EU policies and interests. In fact, thanks to transnational cooperation in EU projects partnership prepares the ground for the exchange of information, personal knowledge and interdisciplinary perspectives, mutual learning and development of innovative approaches¹³⁴. In addition to the benefits created by a strong collaboration between transnational entities, it should be remembered that partnership is also a key resource for the project itself: the interchange of human and structural resources, knowledge and experiences allows the joint development and fulfilment of value added projects.

How can a partnership be formed? The starting point is to define the profile of potential partners by taking into consideration the possible types of beneficiaries outlined in the call for proposals, such as profit or non-for-profit organisations, public or private entities, their country of origin and their legal status. Organisations interested in the development of a EU project may start searching for partners by exploiting their own experiences, acquaintances and contacts or by taking advantage of already tested partnerships. In order to find new partners, a number of instruments can be exploited: info-days, data-bases, dedicated agencies (in Italy there is the APRE Agency) and dedicated websites (for example www.europabook.eu). In particular, info-days are the best tool for finding new partners and for getting more information about the call of proposals. First, the info-day is an occasion to meet in first person European authorities and to have the possibility of asking questions in order to understand better the aims of the funding programme and of the Commission. Second, during the info-day one can get the so-called 'info-pack', that is to say the entire documentation concerning the call for proposals. Third, the info-day allows to collect contacts of other organisations interested in EU funding and, consequently, it prepares the ground for the construction of new partnerships.

¹³³ F. Bussi, *Progettare in partenariato*, F. Angeli, 2001, p. 14.

¹³⁴ M. D'Amico, *op. cit.*, p. 196.

Another instrument that helps to get information about the EU programming, EU institutions or funding opportunities is the Europe Direct Network. This network has the objective to make citizens more aware of the European Union and of its policies at local and regional levels, as well as to offer them the possibility to communicate with EU bodies in the form of questions, opinions or suggestions.¹³⁵

For the construction of a good partnership, it is important to search for a balance between consolidated partners and new partners with high potential, and the best criterion to do this is to evaluate both the potential partners' interest towards the project proposal and their ability to make a very positive contribution to the project success. Once the partnership is formed, the following step is to formalise its structure, which means organising roles and tasks for each partner, developing the project proposal in a more detailed way and establishing the leading proponent of the project. The leading proponent, also called the applicant organisation, is thought to be the 'engine' of the partnership, since it must possess a consolidated experience and it is the only representative in front of the Commission at the moment of the project submission as well as during the entire lifecycle of the project, if funded¹³⁶.

Once the partnership is built and the tasks established, the effective design of the project can begin: 'design' does not mean the simple execution of activities and tasks by the partners, but a real collaboration, a joint management of the activities and a common responsibility in meeting the given deadlines. Indeed, pursuing common objectives in partnership creates a fundamental added value to projects. Since the partnership plays a crucial role in the realisation of a concrete project, a section concerning the partnership description can be found in the eForms of EU programmes, where applicants must indicate, for example, the criteria used for the partners' selection, the relationship that exists between them as well as the partners' experience in the concerned field. In conclusion, in the present programming (2014-2020) partnership is being thought as a fundamental feature for the project success and it is seen a key aspect for the selection and evaluation process conducted by the Commission.

3.3.2. Calls for proposals

The call for proposals is an instrument used by the European Commission to promote EU funding programmes. Generally, the call is published on the website of the EU institutions, and sometimes other appropriate tools can be used, including the publication of the text of the call on the Official

¹³⁵ V. Pagano, *Manuale di progettazione europea e compendio di progettazione per le università: come atenei, facoltà e dipartimenti possono progettare interventi con i fondi europei*, Salerno, Arcoiris, 2010, p. 114.

¹³⁶ V. Pagano, *op. cit.*, p. 198.

Journal. The call of proposals are often managed by the Directorate-Generals (DGs) of the Commission, but the 2014-2020 programming period has seen an increased involvement of some dedicated Agencies (the most known is the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency, EACEA), which have been established to facilitate the management of programmes and their respective calls. The Agencies have the role of managers and supervisors of funding programmes, but they cannot take political decisions concerning their specific priorities and objectives¹³⁷. In the call for proposals the following pieces of information can be found: expected results of the programme in question, types of beneficiaries, evaluation and selection criteria, conditions for participating, deadlines for submission and budget earmarked for the call. Finally, the call for proposal is often complemented by a Programme Guide that provides detailed rules for participating in the actions as well as more information about the pursued priorities.

3.3.3. Documents for applicants

For project submissions applicants have to send all the documents requested by the call for proposals to the DG or the Agency in charge of the programme within the deadline for application. In most cases, the project is presented by completing the indicated electronic application form (eForm) and by attaching some compulsory annexes (often a financial identification form, a legal identity form and a declaration on honour¹³⁸). In the past eForms and attached documents had to be sent by post to the Commission or to the DG in charge for the programme whilst nowadays the application procedure is always completed online: each organisation registers in the Participants' portal and receives a Participant Identification Code, called PIC, that will be requested in the application form; after that it can start creating and filling in the eForm.

Before starting to design a project and to submit the application, applicants should read the call for proposals and the Programme Guide carefully. As described in the previous paragraph, these two documents are essential to become acquainted with the compulsory conditions for participating in the actions and with detailed information on the pursued objectives. In addition, other documents shall be taken into account in order to put forward an effective project proposal, that is all the materials pertaining to the programme relevant legislation. The key document that applicants should keep in mind is the Regulation establishing the programme. The ground of every EU programme is, in fact, laid down by a Regulation, from its legal basis to general and specific actions, budget and other financial provisions, beneficiaries, monitoring and evaluation criteria. Sometimes the Regulation establishes that an additional annual or multiannual document, which is called Work

¹³⁷ I. Sgandurra, *Linee guida di europrogettazione. Fondi comunitari diretti*, Padova, CLEUP, 2012, p. 70.

¹³⁸ V. Pagano, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

Programme, should implement and complete the provisions set out in the Regulation itself. An accurate lecture of the Work Programme is also fundamental for the project design. Its structure often consists of two main parts: the first one, which is more general in its contents, describes the programme, the sub-programmes or specific actions, the financial rules and the criteria used for the selection and evaluation, while the second part is more detailed as it outlines the specific priorities under each action which are adopted for a limited period of time (one or more years).¹³⁹ Lastly, in order to write and design a good project it is also important to consider further studies and analysis published on the topic tackled by the funding programme for which the candidate applies and every other document related to the implemented policy.

Once the project has been submitted, it is evaluated according to the standards identified in the call of proposals proceeding in the following order: exclusion criteria, eligibility, selection criteria and quantitative evaluation. When a project is officially selected by the Commission, the financing is formalised with the signature of a Grant Decision or a Grant Agreement (depending on the place where the beneficiary is legally established), formally establishing the leading proponent and the other partners, their legal representative, the official start and conclusion of the project, the grant amount and further payment procedures.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁹ I. Sgandurra, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

¹⁴⁰ M. D'Amico, *op. cit.*, p. 220.

II. EU PROJECT DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT

CONTENTS: 1.Project Cycle Management - 1.1.Introduction to PCM - 1.2.The cycle of operations - 1.2.1.Programming - 1.2.2.Identification - 1.2.3.Formulation - 1.2.4.Financing - 1.2.5.Implementation - 1.2.6.Evaluation and Audit - 2.Logical Framework Approach - 2.1.Background - 2.1.Analysis Stage - 2.2.1.Stakeholder Analysis - 2.2.2.Problem Analysis – 2.2.3.Analysis of Objectives - 2.2.4.Analysis of Strategies - 2.3.Planning Stage: design of the Logical Framework Matrix - 3.From Logframe Matrix to Work Packages

Chapter II tackles the issue of project development, analysing the progressive actions that need to be undertaken in order to transform a simple idea into a concrete and feasible project. In the Chapter Project Cycle Management (PCM) and Logical Framework Approach (LFA) methodologies are presented and investigated. PCM and LFA are design and management tools to be used for the achievement of the following goals: to take into account the existing negative problems of a specific target group, to establish coherent relationships between the objectives that the project is supposed to attain and to ensure adequate implementation, management and monitoring during the life-cycle of the project.

Realising an initiative funded through EU grants means using ideas and resources to achieve objectives that fit into the framework of EU major policies and priorities. For this reason, the transnational projects financed by the European Commission are supposed to originate from the ideas of a group of transnational partner organisations whose aim is, indeed, to offer solutions to the problems or needs of an identified target group. In order to produce relevant, feasible and effective projects, the instruments of PCM and LFA, consisting of a range of different and progressive stages, shall be exploited.

The first macro-paragraph of Chapter II focuses on PCM, giving a general overview of its evolution since the 1990s and analysing the cycle of its progressive phases (Programming, Identification, Formulation, Financing, Implementation and Evaluation). The second macro-paragraph focuses on the LFA and design of the Logical Framework Matrix. In this section the role of the Logical Framework Approach in project development is investigated, then the two phases into which the LFA is divided (Analysis Stage and Planning Stage) are analysed and, finally, the design of the Logframe matrix is explained. The third macro-paragraph describes the step-by-step preparation of activity schedules, called 'Work Packages', which takes place after the design of the Logframe matrix and supports the ideation of an objective-oriented work plan for project implementation.

1. Project Cycle Management

Project Cycle Management is a set of project design and management tools based on the Logical Framework Approach. PCM includes the planning, organisation, monitoring and control of all the aspects related to a project, and it supports the achievement of the pursued objectives complying with the established timetable, costs, performance criteria and quality. It guarantees a complete and exhaustive overview of the whole life-cycle of a project as well as an active involvement of stakeholders and target groups. It assures that actions and initiatives funded through EU resources are able to tackle real problems affecting civil society and able to involve interested stakeholders and beneficiaries directly. The key objective of PCM is, thus, to improve the management of external co-operation actions by taking better account of essential issues and framework conditions in both designing and implementing projects and programmes, which shall help to develop a clear and appropriate intervention strategy and to create benefits in the long-term period.¹⁴¹ This methodological approach supports the development of projects that must be relevant, feasible and sustainable. Projects are relevant when they are consistent with the real needs and concerns of beneficiaries and target groups, as well as with the priorities of the programme for which applicants are applying and with sector-based goals of EU policies and/or national policies. Projects are feasible in the sense that their pursued objectives must be realistic and concretely achievable and they are sustainable in the sense that they should produce sustainable results.¹⁴²

The next paragraphs will provide a general overview of PCM and a description of the cycle of operations (six progressive phases) characterising this methodology.

1.1. Introduction to PCM

Project Cycle Management (PCM) was formally adopted by the European Commission in 1992 with the aim of promoting qualitative improvement of project proposals and, consequently, an increased effectiveness of EU development policies. The first manual on this topic was published in 1993, then it was updated in 2001, and two years later the Commission decided to revise it again and to publish the 'PCM Guidelines' (2004) in which a series of changes and improvements to the materials presented in the previous manuals were included. The Guidelines identify the quality criteria to be exploited in the different phases of project development and explain the planning technique based on the Logical Framework Matrix. The main objective of the updated manual was to facilitate the

¹⁴¹ European Commission, *Manual Project Cycle Management*, Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union, 2001., p. 2.

¹⁴² I. Sgandurra, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

identification, formulation and implementation of interventions complying with three quality criteria: relevance, feasibility and effectiveness.¹⁴³ Relevance, feasibility and effectiveness are the key 'ingredients' for the development of high quality project proposals, able to tackle real problems and to guarantee effective and long-term changes. Relevance seeks the external consistency of projects, which depends on the project capability to be consistent with EU policies and interests and the capability to establish a direct relationship with the problems and needs that the selected target group faces. Feasibility seeks the internal consistency of projects: it ensures the project work programme is defined in a clear and logical manner so as to produce sustainable and concrete results. Effectiveness refers to the project capability to assure the persistence of project relevance and feasibility during its entire implementation: thus, in order to be effective projects must be managed in an efficient manner and must achieve the expected results.

Project Cycle Management is a technique that had been used by several donors, including private companies of several EU countries and international organisations, before being officially adopted by the European Commission in the 1990s. At that time the European Community decided to adopt the PCM methodology since a significant proportion of project proposals, submitted to the Commission in the previous years, had performed poorly. In particular, projects had revealed poor planning and preparation as risks had been insufficiently taken into account and lessons from past experiences had been seldom incorporated into new project proposals. Furthermore factors affecting the longer-term sustainability of benefits had been ignored, and consequently projects often had not been relevant to beneficiaries.¹⁴⁴

As stated at the beginning of the paragraph, PCM is a set of project design and management tools used to conceive the management activities and decision-making procedures that can be ascribed to the entire life of projects (including tasks, roles, responsibilities, documents and decision options)¹⁴⁵. When we refer to the term 'project' we mean, as stated by the Commission itself, a series of activities aimed at pursuing clearly specified objectives within a defined period of time and with an established budget¹⁴⁶. Projects are, in fact, characterised by a number of recurring elements: they focus on identified target groups and involve specific stakeholders, they develop a precise strategy for coordination and management, as well as for monitoring and evaluation, and they establish a

¹⁴³ M. D'Amico, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

¹⁴⁴ ITAD Ltd. (Information Training and Agricultural Development), *Project Cycle Management. Training Handbook*, Hassocks, 1999, p. 9.

¹⁴⁵ European Commission, EuropeAid, *Project Cycle Management Guidelines*, Brussels, 2004, p. 17.

¹⁴⁶ European Commission, EuropeAid, *op. cit.*, p. 143.

defined budget through a precise financial assessment. Thus, the PCM methodology supports the direct involvement of target groups and stakeholders in project development as well as the design of well-managed projects in line with the quality assessment criteria of relevance, feasibility and effectiveness. In particular, PCM ensures that projects sustain EU interests, objectives and policies, are relevant to the problems faced by target groups and can tackle them in a concrete manner. Moreover, PCM seeks to guarantee that projects are feasible, which means their goals can be realistically achieved, and the benefits they generate are sustainable.

1.2. The cycle of operations

To support efficient project design, management and control, the Project Development Management methodology involves a sequence of different phases, whose key aims are to outline the project progression from the beginning to the end and to transform a simple idea into a concrete and feasible project¹⁴⁷. The progressive stages of PCM, which will be analysed in the following paragraphs, are six: Programming, Identification, Formulation, Financing, Implementation, Evaluation and Audit.

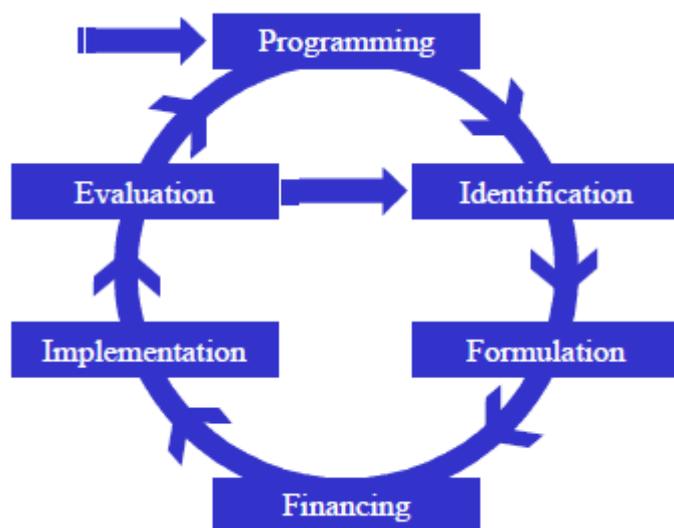


Figure 5. – Cycle of operations¹⁴⁸

These phases have been conceived to ensure that projects make concrete contribution to one or more key objectives pursued by the European Union, tackle real problems affecting the selected

¹⁴⁷ M. Damiani, *Project Management per tutti*, Padova, Libreriauniversitaria.it, 2012, p. 75.

¹⁴⁸ Figure taken from: ITAD Ltd. (Information Training and Agricultural Development), *op. cit.*, p. 6.

target groups, and they are feasible and sustainable as they can realistically achieve the pursued goals and generate sustainable benefits. The six phases are progressive, which means each one must be fully completed in order to tackle the next one in an effective manner. The duration of each phase depends on the project that is designed, however project identification and formulation are essential stages to develop a consistent and feasible project, therefore they usually take more time than the other phases.

1.2.1. Programming

The programming phase is up to EU institutions and Member States' authorities, and it often consists of an analysis of the political, economic and social situation, as well as of the past and current programming periods. During this phase EU and national bodies seek to identify the existing problems and constraints in order to develop a targeted strategy focused on well-defined objectives and sector priorities. The goal is, thus, to elaborate a relevant and feasible programming framework within which programmes and projects can be identified and prepared¹⁴⁹. Through this analysis the key priorities and sector policies to be pursued and the programmes to be implemented are identified and, on the basis of these elements, a clear response strategy is conceived.

1.2.2. Identification

Identification is devoted to the analysis of the existing situation in order to acquire and elaborate the information necessary for the identification of stakeholders, the problems they face and the viable intervention strategy to implement. These pieces of information, which are supposed to emerge from the identification phase, shall prove to be consistent with the development priorities pursued by EU policies and funding programmes¹⁵⁰ and they shall assess the relevance and feasibility of project ideas.

During the identification phase project ideas, which are still general concepts, are elaborated in detail and, in the end, transformed into a concrete project proposal which can be submitted by the project organisers to the Commission through a dedicated call for proposals. The working out of project ideas during the identification phase is often carried out through the exploitation of a set of project design and management tools based on the Logical Framework Approach and the Logframe Matrix. In order to carry out the identification process with the use of the LFA tools, two methods can be used: on one hand project ideas can be elaborated directly by a restricted group of people

¹⁴⁹ European Commission, EuropeAid, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

¹⁵⁰ I. Sgandurra, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

(usually the project managers and/or a group of individuals representative of the consortium of organisations applying for the call for proposals); on the other hand the GOPP methodology can be applied.

GOPP stands for 'Goal Oriented Project Planning' and it is an approach that provides an analytical structure for the identification, planning, and management of projects. GOPP is a planning process developed in workshop settings (generally it consists of a two or three-day workshop) and involving, in the development of project ideas, not only the project managers/organisers but also the identified target groups and beneficiaries. Indeed, GOPP is a procedure which has been conceived specifically to involve all the key actors and beneficiaries of a project and which seeks to promote the ethics of 'bottom-up project development' involving direct consultations and discussions between project organisers and stakeholders. GOPP was conceived and first implemented in 1983 by the German Agency for technical Cooperation – GTZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit), and later on it started to be exploited also by European and international bodies and became a technique used in Project Cycle Management in order to guarantee high quality project development.¹⁵¹ This methodology is based on the figure of the moderator: an external and neutral moderator with a high degree of experience, who assists and helps the group during the GOPP workshop. During the workshop project managers and stakeholders/target groups shall cooperate and discuss together the following issues:

- identification of the target groups that should be involved in the project directly;
- identification of the problems that the project must tackle, their causes and consequences;
- definition of the objectives that need to be achieved;
- identification of the activities that need to be planned during the project life;
- rules and arrangements concerning project monitoring and management;
- indicators that will form the basis for the project evaluation during the execution phase.

These pieces of information shall be put together in a dedicated table: indeed the final outcome of the GOPP activity is the creation of a structured and comprehensive diagram for project planning, that is the Logical Framework matrix (whose structure will be analysed in paragraph 2.3). To sum up, GOPP is a planning technique that can be employed during the identification phase of project development as it seeks to elaborate the information necessary to conceive project proposals with the help of stakeholders and target groups. Its main strengths are to conduct a joint analysis which

¹⁵¹ F. Bussi, *GOPP: una metodologia strutturata di programmazione concertata*, Osservatorio Isfol, 5, 1997, p. 3.

demands the active involvement of all participants and, consequently, to tackle the identified topic/problem in a more effective manner.

Whether GOPP is used during the identification stage or not, it is important to remember that the information requirements about the project that need to emerge from the identification phase are the following: policy and programme context (partners and participating Member States), stakeholder analysis, problem analysis, objective analysis, strategy analysis, preliminary project description, indicative resource and cost implications, indicative management and financial arrangements; preliminary assessment of financial, technical and social sustainability, and follow-up work plan for the formulation phase.¹⁵²

1.2.3. Formulation

Formulation is devoted to the identification of a precise intervention strategy, set out through the definition of the expected objectives and results as well as the definition of the project work plan. Indeed, this phase is supposed to confirm the relevance and feasibility of the project ideas as defined in the identification stage. During the formulation phase concrete project design takes place and ends up with the establishment of management arrangements (financial arrangements, monitoring, evaluation and audit results, coordination structures), cost-benefit analysis and a detailed project description (objectives and purposes, target groups, duration, venues, results, needed resources and expected costs). The ultimate outcome of the formulation stage is, in fact, the executive project: a final document in which all the elements and features of the project are described in detail. After their formulation, projects are evaluated by the funding body (in the case of EU funds by the European Commission) according to established criteria defined in the calls for proposals, and if the criteria are met projects are funded and their implementation phase can begin.

1.2.4. Financing

During the financing phase project proposals are evaluated by the competent authorities who decide whether projects shall be funded or not. If projects are approved, a binding agreement (known as Grant Agreement in the case of EU grants) is signed between the applicants and the funding body. At this stage the project organisers and the funding body agree the procedure of implementation and formalise them in a legal document laying down arrangements through which the project will be financed and realised¹⁵³.

¹⁵² European Commission, EuropeAid, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

¹⁵³ ITAD Ltd. (Information Training and Agricultural Development), *op. cit.*, p. 7.

1.2.5. Implementation

Once projects are selected by the Commission and the Grant Agreement between the applicant organisations and the European Commission is signed, the implementation phase, consisting of the realisation of the project activities, can begin. This phase, in which project intervention is finalised, also includes monitoring and reporting processes, whose key aims are to manage the available resources efficiently, monitor and report on progress, deliver the expected results and purposes of the project and contribute effectively to the overall objective of the project.¹⁵⁴ During the implementation phase the expected results and benefits are delivered and, after that, are evaluated in order to state whether a concrete and effective transformation has been produced by the project. Implementation must be considered a crucial stage as it allows to evaluate the impact of projects on beneficiaries and target groups and, ultimately, the effectiveness of the funding programme in achieving EU interests and priorities.

1.2.5. Evaluation and Audit

Evaluation can be defined as the assessment of the efficiency, impact, relevance and sustainability of projects. The evaluation phase seeks to assess the project in order to determine the fulfilment of its scope and objectives, its effectiveness and sustainability. This stage is characterised by certain recurring key features. First, it shall produce an impartial and independent analysis. Second, it shall make use of appropriate and transparent instruments to state the success of project impact and dissemination. Finally, it shall elaborate clear and credible findings and recommendations that can be useful for beneficiaries, stakeholders and policy-makers at national and European levels: in fact, evaluation findings can be used to improve future projects and programmes. In general the evaluation process, for the most part, comes after the implementation phase, however it is also common practice to conduct a mid-term evaluation during the project implementation in order to identify contingent problems or negative aspects that need to be changed and revised before the conclusion of the project¹⁵⁵.

Audit is often intended as a part of the evaluation phase. It relates to the assessment of the regularity of project expenditure and income. At this stage the goal is to ensure that project expenditure and income comply with laws, regulations and contractual rules and that project resources are managed efficiently in accordance with the principles of sound financial management.

¹⁵⁴ European Commission, EuropeAid, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

¹⁵⁵ ITAD Ltd. (Information Training and Agricultural Development), *op. cit.*, p. 8.

2. Logic Framework Approach

The key tool used within Project Cycle Management for project planning and management is the 'Logical Framework Approach' (LFA), a technique exploited with the aim of analysing a given situation and defining the actions that must be undertaken in order to improve that situation. The LFA can be defined as an evolutionary, iterative process starting with the analysis of an existing situation as a basis for later planning. This analytical process gives structure to the 'Logical Framework Matrix' (also called Logframe matrix) passing through two progressive stages, the analysis stage and the planning stage. The following paragraphs will explain the functioning of the Logical Framework Approach in detail by analysing the different processes to be followed in order to achieve effective project development.

2.1. Background

The Logical Framework Approach (LFA) can be defined as an analytical process supporting project planning and management, since it provides a set of progressive tools which are exploited as a part of an iterative process to support structured and systematic analysis of project ideas.¹⁵⁶ This approach was developed in the 1960s to help the US Agency of International Development improve its project design and evaluation system, then it was adopted by other development agencies as well as by several international organisations, and since the mid-1990s the European Community included it within the framework of PCM. Over the years the LFA has partially changed its format and terminology, however its key principles and structure have always remained the same.

The LFA involves different levels of analysis which are carried out progressively during the identification and formulation phases: Analysis Stage and Planning Stage. The Analysis Stage consists of further levels of analysis: stakeholder analysis, problem analysis, objective analysis and strategy analysis. During these phases the existing situation is analysed in order to work out an overview of the future desired situation and to select the most viable strategy that should be implemented to produce positive changes. In the planning stage the results emerged during the analysis stage are transcribed into a practical, operational plan to be implemented and the Logical Framework Matrix is drawn up¹⁵⁷. In fact the planning stage allows to develop the logframe and to define and schedule the project activities. The outcome of this analytical process, implemented during the planning stage, is a matrix consisting of four columns and four (or more) rows: these boxes summarise the key elements and features of the project work plan, notably the project description and intervention

¹⁵⁶ European Commission, EuropeAid, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

¹⁵⁷ ITAD Ltd. (Information Training and Agricultural Development), *op. cit.*, p. 34.

logic, the assumptions for the project success, the indicators and sources of verification explaining how the project will be monitored and evaluated. The vertical logic of the matrix identifies what will be done and realised throughout the project life, while the horizontal logic refers to the effects of the indicators and how and where they will be measured.¹⁵⁸ The following table shows the structure of the Logical Framework Matrix:

Project Description	Indicators	Source of Verification	Assumptions
Overall Objective – The project's contribution to policy or programme objectives (impact)	How the OO is to be measured including Quantity, Quality, Time?	How will the information be collected, when and by whom?	
Purpose – Direct benefits to the target group(s)	How the Purpose is to be measured including Quantity, Quality, Time	As above	If the Purpose is achieved, what assumptions must hold true to achieve the OO?
Results – Tangible products or services delivered by the project	How the results are to be measured including Quantity, Quality, Time	As above	If Results are achieved, what assumptions must hold true to achieve the Purpose?
Activities – Tasks that have to be undertaken to deliver the desired results			If Activities are completed, what assumptions must hold true to deliver the results?

Figure 6. - Structure of a Logframe Matrix¹⁵⁹

The logical framework matrix is, thus, a way of summarising the relevant information about the planned intervention in a comprehensive and understandable form. It shows the key elements of a project, and in particular: why the project is carried out (Intervention logic); what the project is expected to achieve (Intervention logic and Indicators) and how it is going to achieve it (Activities); which external factors are crucial for its success (Assumptions); where to find the required information to assess the project success and impact (Sources of verification)¹⁶⁰.

Thus, the LFA methodology can be understood as an aid to thinking, since it permits that information is analysed and organised in a logical and structured manner. For this reason, it is often used within the Project Cycle Management framework: it may be implemented during the identification phase in order to analyse the existing situation and identify potential strategies; during

¹⁵⁸ European Commission, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

¹⁵⁹ European Commission, EuropeAid, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

¹⁶⁰ ITAD Ltd. (Information Training and Agricultural Development), *op. cit.*, p. 33.

the formulation phase for the preparation of an effective work plan; during the implementation phase for the ideation of key management arrangements; and during the evaluation and audit phase since at this stage the matrix can help to provide a base for performance and impact evaluation.¹⁶¹

In addition, it must be underlined the fact that the Logical Framework Approach is also employed by the European Commission as the basis for the eForm structure. Frequently eForms ask applicants to provide a clear explanation of their project intervention strategy: the matrix is, indeed, an effective tool helping applicants read and understand the eForm properly and provide the requested pieces of information in a coherent and understandable manner, which constitute the basis for the Commission's evaluation and selection process. Understanding the purpose of EU grants and the logic governing both the eForm structure and the evaluation criteria is essential for the design of valuable and effective project proposals which are able to meet all the quality criteria established by the Commission and which could have, consequently, more chances to be funded¹⁶². Thus, the Logical Framework Approach, with its objective-oriented tools and diagrams, can prove to be an effective means for project analysis and management when properly understood and intelligently implemented.

In conclusion, the Logical Framework Approach is an objective-oriented approach able to outline objectives clearly and to set them out in a hierarchy of objectives. It intends to enhance the ideation of high quality project proposals, characterised by clear internal and external coherence: internal coherence since the LFA seeks to establish relationships between the key elements of the intervention strategy and external coherence since it seeks to create linkages between the intervention strategy and the key development priorities of the funding programme. Moreover, the Logframe matrix should not be seen simply as a mere diagram to be filled in through a set of progressive steps, but as an aid to thinking, a dynamic tool which can be used throughout the project life and which can also be reassessed and revised as the project itself develops and circumstances change.

2.2. Analysis Stage

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, the Analysis Stage involves four different levels of analysis: stakeholder analysis, problem analysis, objective analysis and strategy analysis. At this stage the goal is to develop a synthetic, but clear framework for project planning and implementation. The outcomes of the Analysis Stage shall be the definition of the future desired situation to be attained

¹⁶¹ European Commission, *EuropeAid, op. cit.*, p. 58.

¹⁶² M. D'Amico, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

through project implementation and the identification of the most suitable strategy that must be implemented to generate positive changes for the benefit of the identified target group. In the following paragraphs every step of the Analysis Stage will be investigated and described more in detail.

2.2.1. Stakeholder Analysis

Stakeholders are individuals, groups of people, institutions or firms that may, positively or negatively, directly or indirectly, affect or be affected by a project or programme.¹⁶³ A solid analysis of stakeholders' concerns, opinions and expectations is a fundamental step in project development. As different groups of people have different needs and interests, through stakeholder analysis project managers can decide which target group needs to be taken into consideration for the project design and implementation. Stakeholder analysis answers basically to the following questions: which problems and opportunities should be analysed by the project, what target group should be chosen as the main target of the project, and who may benefit from the project realisation¹⁶⁴.

The key elements emerging from stakeholder analysis are, above all, the identification of the major problem/issue to be considered and tackled and the identification of all the groups that may be concerned with the identified problem and may be involved in the project realisation. Furthermore stakeholder analysis shall investigate needs and interests of the target groups and their contingent roles in the project, and it shall identify the extent of cooperation or disagreement among the different groups of stakeholders. In the end these outcomes must be incorporated into the project development. Thus this type of analysis outlines the concerns of some priority groups and promotes the involvement and participation of those groups in the definition of the key elements of a project proposal. Moreover it seeks to identify and maximise the economic, institutional and social benefits that a project can generate for a precise target group¹⁶⁵ and to reduce the potential risks and negative impact.

In conclusion stakeholder analysis supports the identification of those groups who might be concerned about the project realisation and outcomes, as well as the understanding of the roles that each organisation participating in the project can play for its success. Analysis will show that the identified stakeholders do not have the same relevance to the project idea: some of them might play a marginal role, or an operational, institutional role, while others might play a key role in bringing

¹⁶³ European Commission, *EuropeAid, op. cit.*, p. 62.

¹⁶⁴ A. Bonifazi, A. Giannetti, *Finanziare l'impresa con i fondi europei: strumenti ed opportunità 2014-2020, redazione e presentazione delle domande, simulazioni pratiche*, Milanofiori Assago, IPSOA, 2014, p. 170.

¹⁶⁵ M. D'Amico, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

about the project success. Moreover, stakeholder analysis helps to establish the relationships between the actors involved in the project in terms of cooperation and networking: for example it may be useful to build the partnership of a project as it allows to identify the key actors that can be involved in project development and implementation as leading proponents, partner organisations or beneficiaries¹⁶⁶.

2.2.2. Problem Analysis

In order to design a clear project structure it is fundamental to identify the problems characterising the existing negative situation and the cause-effect relationships between those identified problems. Problem analysis involves three different steps: analysis of the existing situation, through which the framework and subject of analysis are defined; identification of the key problems affecting the situation; design of a diagram, called 'problem tree', able to highlight the different cause-effect relationships that exist between the identified problems and to establish a hierarchy between the existing problems.¹⁶⁷

The design of a problem tree is the most critical stage of problem analysis, however it can be a very helpful tool since it provides an accurate, but simplified picture of the reality that project managers intend to face¹⁶⁸. The problem tree is, thus, a simplified summary picture of the existing negative situation, and ideally it shall be designed during a participatory group event. The event often opens with a brainstorm exercise whose goal is to outline the key problems affecting the identified negative situation: the key problems are usually outlined through the use of pieces of paper on which participants write problem statements and which are put on a visual display and discussed jointly. Among the identified problems, one starter problem must be selected, and only after having chosen the starter problem participants look for the relationships existing between the starter problem and the other ones. The starter problem is, in fact, linked to the others through cause-effect relationships, and participants are asked to establish a precise hierarchy of causes and effects between them by drawing up the problem tree. As shown in the figure below, if the problem is a cause it goes on the level below and if it is an effect it goes above, whereas if it is neither a cause nor a consequence it goes on the same level.

¹⁶⁶ M. D'Amico, *op. cit.*, p. 128.

¹⁶⁷ M. D'Amico, *op. cit.*, p. 129-30.

¹⁶⁸ European Commission, EuropeAid, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

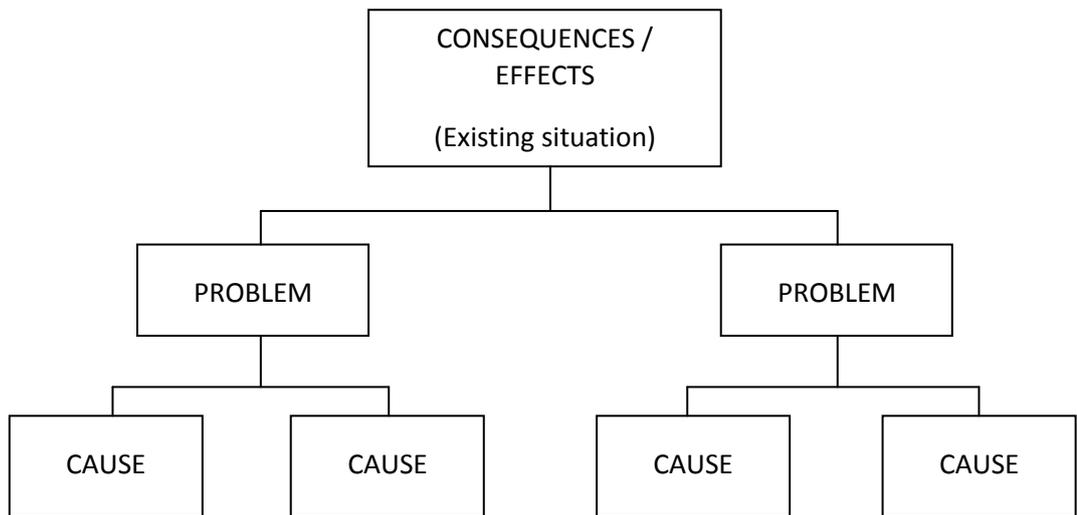


Figure 7. – Cause-effect relationships between the problems

After having placed the identified problems in the problem tree, those problems should be connected with cause-effect arrows showing the links and relationships that exist between them, and the diagram completeness should be reviewed by verifying if there are other problems worth to be specified in the diagram. The following figure is an example of problem tree:

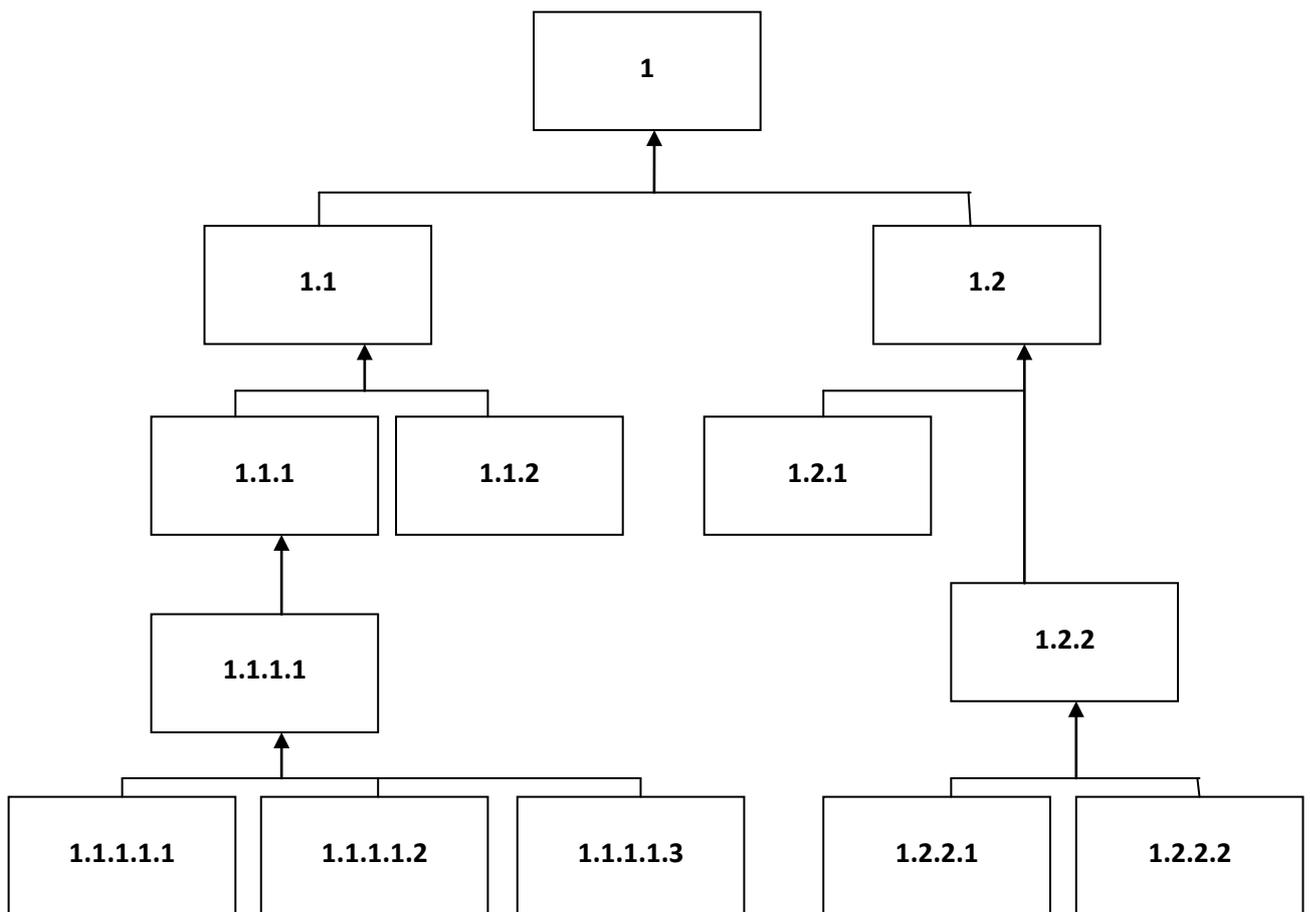


Figure 8. – Example of a problem tree

Finally, it must be underlined that the problems identified at this stage should outline concrete and tangible aspects of the daily reality and cannot be expressed in the form of personal opinions or contingent solutions. In order to grasp the real negative aspects of a situation, the problems specified in the problem tree should be real, that is based on real facts and not based on personal opinions or ideas, and objective, that is based on concrete and tangible facts. They should also be negative as they refer to the negative aspects of an existing situation. Finally, they should be clear, that is immediately understandable, and specific in the sense they refer to specific aspects or elements characterising the existing situation.¹⁶⁹

2.2.3. Analysis of Objectives

During this phase the negative situation designed in the problem tree is changed: the problems are converted into solutions and positive achievements, becoming the objectives to be pursued by the project. The analysis of objectives should end with the realisation of a diagram of objectives, called 'objective tree', which provides a clear overview of the expected achievements and describes the future situation once the identified problems have been remedied. The process of designing the diagram of objectives involves the reformulation of all the identified problems into positive situations that are desirable and realistically achievable¹⁷⁰, as well as the revision of the cause-effect relationships and the hierarchy existing between the positive achievements. At this stage it is important not to mix up the objectives, which refer to positive situations to be realised in the future, with the actions or initiatives necessary for achieving them: this is a common mistake that many applicants make in their project proposals¹⁷¹. Moreover, it is important to verify the coherence between the different objectives, since sometimes a cause-effect relationship exists between two problems, but not necessary between their positive equivalents. Lastly, new objectives may be added in the objective tree if they seem to be relevant or others may be deleted if they do not seem suitable.

In conclusion the diagram of objectives is a good instrument that helps to clarify the existing situation, and its main strength is, perhaps, that it establishes a clear correlation between potential project objectives and identified priority problems. The key step during the analysis of objectives is

¹⁶⁹ A. Bonifazi, A. Giannetti, *op. cit.*, p. 181.

¹⁷⁰ European Commission, EuropeAid, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

¹⁷¹ A. Bonifazi, A. Giannetti, *op. cit.*, p. 185.

the definition of what needs to be changed and the definition of the new positive situation which will take shape throughout the project implementation. In addition, the comparison between the two symmetrical 'trees' (problem and objective trees) allows to obtain relevant information to define a good intervention strategy and design a concrete and effective project proposal. Once the objective tree has been drawn up, the next step is to develop an intervention strategy with the help of the following guidelines:

- Can the project tackle all the identified problems and objectives?
- Is there the need to select some of them and to discard the others?
- Which are the positive opportunities?
- Which is the strategy that can have a more positive impact on the problems of the selected target group?
- Which is the best combination of interventions to achieve the expected results and to promote sustainability and positive benefits?

These guidelines will help the definition of a proper intervention strategy, which occurs during the following phase, that is the analysis of strategies.

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2.2.4. Analysis of Strategies

Once stakeholder and problem analysis have been finalised, it is necessary to choose the most suitable intervention strategy for project implementation. The problems that need to be tackled and the objectives that need to be achieved must be deeply scrutinised in order to identify clearly what is the scope of the project. Obviously, it is not possible to intervene in the achievement of all the objectives specified in the objective tree, but it is necessary to select one strategy of intervention by picking a set of cohesive objectives to be included in the strategy and by discarding the ones that are less coherent. In fact, depending on the scope and amount of entailed work, a specific cluster may be selected to form a project-sized intervention, as shown in the figure below:

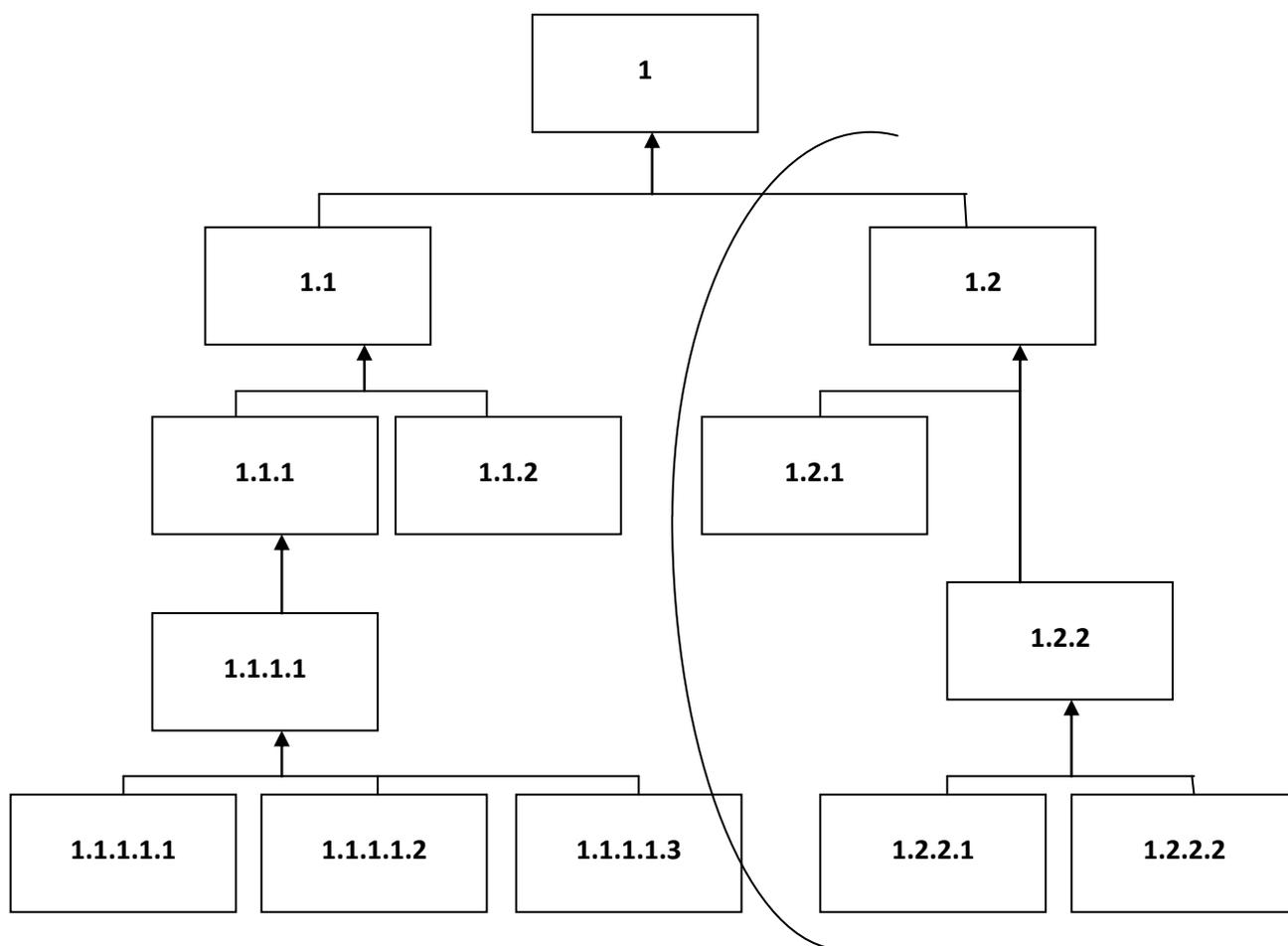


Figure 9. – Selection of a cluster of objectives from the objective tree

Strategy analysis, thus, involves establishing which objectives will be included IN the project and which will remain OUT, and what the project purpose and overall objectives will be.¹⁷² The task of selecting the project strategy is difficult and challenging, however some criteria may be employed to work out the best intervention solution. The choice of the intervention strategy is often made jointly, and the criteria that might help to select a strategy over the others are: expected contribution to EU policy goals and to the EU funding programme; expected contribution to the mission of the involved organisations; benefits to target groups; available human and financial resources; technical feasibility; and the type of organisations involved in the partnership.¹⁷³

With the analysis of strategies the Analysis Stage finishes, and the next step is the Planning Stage through which the outcomes of previous phases (stakeholder, problem, objectives and strategy analysis) are used for the preparation of the Logical Framework Matrix.

¹⁷² ITAD Ltd. (Information Training and Agricultural Development), *op. cit.*, p. 20.

¹⁷³ M. D'Amico, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

2.3. Planning Stage: design of the Logical Framework Matrix

The main output of the Planning Stage is the Logframe matrix. The matrix is a way of presenting a summary of the planned intervention in a comprehensive and understandable form: it defines the intervention strategy of the project and identifies the assumptions and risks that underlie this strategy. Drawing up the matrix provides the basis for evaluating the feasibility of the project, as well as the framework for project implementation. Indeed, the matrix sets out the tasks to be undertaken, the results and objectives to be achieved and the responsibilities of management.

The matrix consists of four columns and four (or more) rows. The vertical logic identifies what will be done and achieved and specifies the assumptions and risks beyond the operation management's control, while the horizontal logic relates to the assessment of the indicators and how and where their results will be measured¹⁷⁴. The first column is dedicated to the project description, and its purpose is to highlight the coherence existing between the different components of the intervention strategy, notably overall objective, purpose, results and activities. The second and third columns are devoted to indicators and sources of verification: indicators are useful tools to assess the quantitative and qualitative effectiveness of the project, while sources of verification are useful tools to assess the achievements of indicators. Lastly, the fourth column is dedicated to assumptions, which are external factors with the potential for influencing the success of the project. To fill in the four columns an established order should be followed. One must begin with the first column, referred to the project description and intervention logic, by following a top-down approach which means completing, first, the section concerning the overall objective, then the one concerning the purpose and, after that, the ones concerning the expected results and activities. One must continue to fill in the fourth column referred to assumptions, by following a bottom-up approach, which means completing, first, the assumptions concerning the activities, and, then, the ones concerning the results and purpose. Finally one must work, at the same time, on the second and third columns containing indicators and sources of verification. This general sequence of completion is shown in the figure below:

¹⁷⁴ European Commission, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

Project Description	Indicators	Sources of verification	Assumptions
Overall objective ①	⑧	⑨	
Purpose ②	⑩	⑪	⑦
Results ③	⑫	⑬	⑥
Activities ④ (optional / inclusion in the matrix)	Not included	Not included	⑤ (optional inclusion in the matrix)

Figure 10. – Sequence of completion of the first column

The first column of the matrix provides a description of the project and of the chosen intervention strategy, which is essential for the definition of indicators, sources of verification and assumptions in the other columns. In order to fill in the first column the objectives put the ‘objective tree’ shall be used, as they refer specifically to the intervention strategy that needs to be implemented. Thus, there is tight correlation between the first column and the problem and objective trees: the contents of the objective tree are actually transferred to the first column of the Logframe matrix¹⁷⁵. The first column is composed of four sections: overall objective, purpose, results and activities. Each section of this column relates to a key element of the intervention strategy. The overall objective refers to long-term social and/or economic benefits that the project pursues, and these benefits do not target only the beneficiaries directly involved in the project, but a more extended public.¹⁷⁶ Thus, it describes the long-term contribution generated by the project in order to overcome the identified need/problem, and it also shows the relationship between the project and the priorities of a specific EU funding programme or policy. The purpose is the direct outcome of the project as it describes the scope of the project and specifies the transformation that is supposed to be achieved through project implementation, that is the benefits generated by the project. In general the project purpose is only one, and it addresses the core problem of the identified situation: in fact, it refers to the benefits granted to the target group as a result of using the services provided by the project¹⁷⁷. Results describe the consequences of project activities, the services delivered to the beneficiaries. They address the main causes of the target group’s problem, thus they refer to those benefits the target group enjoys, the benefits that are supposed to overcome the negative situation and to

¹⁷⁵ I. Sgandurra, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

¹⁷⁶ A. Bonifazi, A. Giannetti, *op. cit.*, p. 192.

¹⁷⁷ ITAD Ltd. (Information Training and Agricultural Development), *op. cit.*, p. 23.

achieve the expected transformation. Results are the immediate outcomes of the project activities and they describe what beneficiaries gain through the realisation of the project activities. Activities are the concrete means for the working out of the intervention strategy. They are part of the work programme carried out by the project and aimed at delivering the established results.

The mechanism characterising the Logframe Matrix can be fully understood if the above-mentioned sections of the first column are read from the bottom to the top (as shown in the figure below): if financial and human resources are adequate the planned activities can be realised, if the activities are realised the expected results can be achieved, if the results are attained the scope of the project is reached, and if the scope is reached the project can realistically contribute to the attainment of the overall objective.

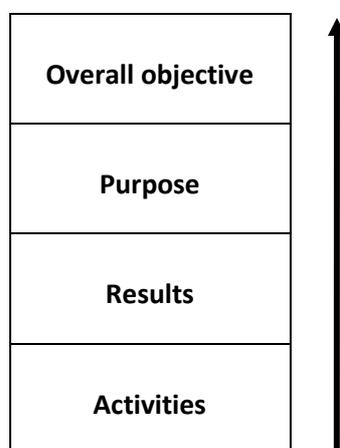


Figure 11. – Bottom-up logic of the first column of the matrix

Assumptions are contained in the fourth column, and they can be defined as external elements that can have a potential impact on the success of a project, but lie outside the direct control of project organisers¹⁷⁸. In fact, some external factors may affect project implementation and on those factors the project often does not have direct control. Assumptions are not part of the project, they cannot be controlled by project managers/organisers, but they may have effects on project implementation anyway. Assumptions can be: certain, probable or improbable. If they are absolutely certain they should not be considered and specified in the column. If they are probable, they must be included in the column since they are assumptions ‘with full rights’. If they are improbable, they might have a real negative influence on the project success, therefore in this case project managers

¹⁷⁸ European Commission, EuropeAid, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

shall reconsider and possibly change their whole project proposal. A functional way of assessing and verifying the relevance of assumptions is to use the following algorithm:

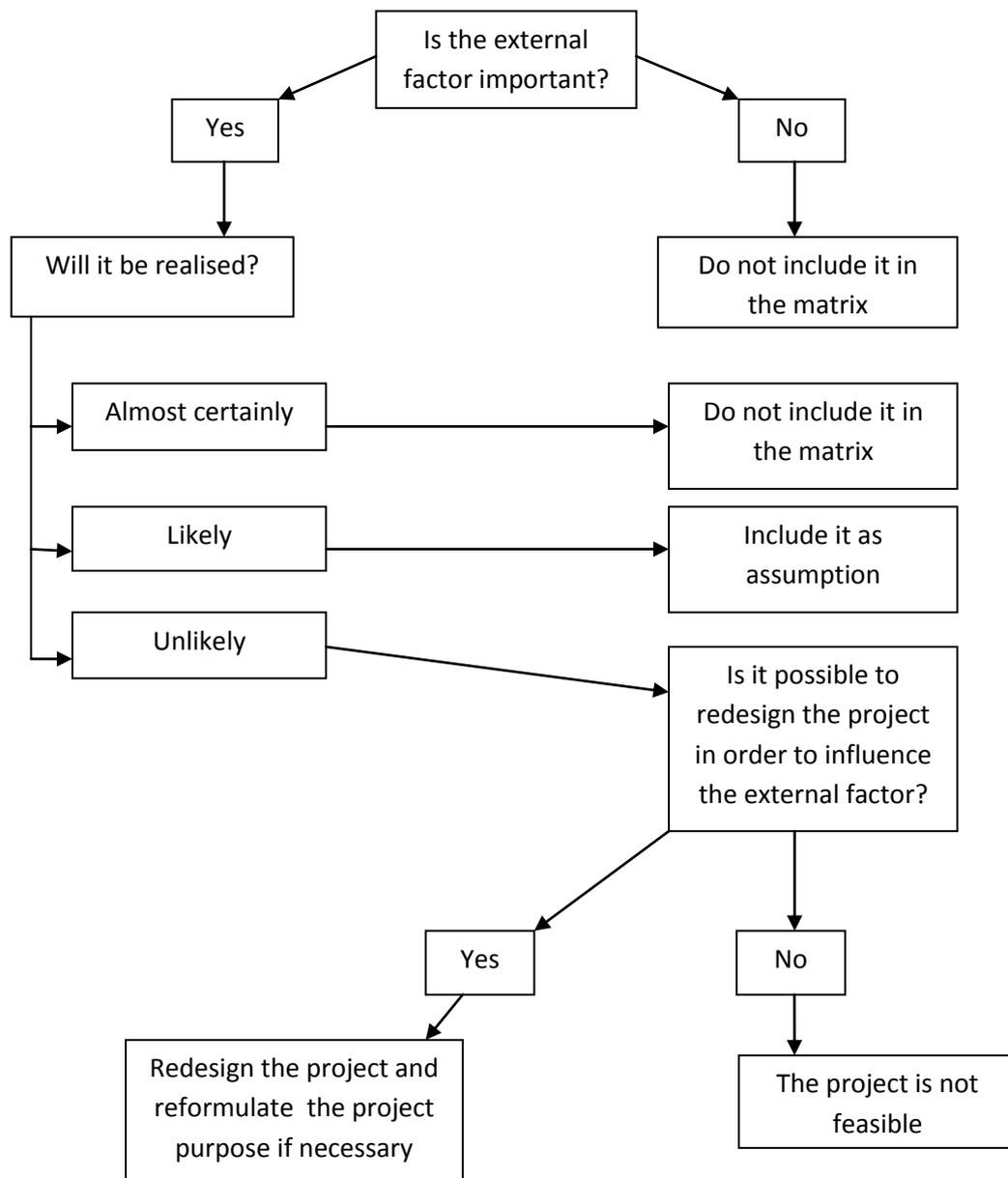


Figure 12. – Algorithm assessing the relevance of assumptions¹⁷⁹

The second column contains indicators that can be used to evaluate the achievement of objectives. They describe the objectives in operationally measurable terms and provide the basis for performance measurement. Indeed, they define *in itinere* and *ex post* monitoring processes and tools, able to assess the project implementation and impact, and they often comply with a methodology known as ‘SMART methodology’. According to this method, indicators shall be:

¹⁷⁹ A similar example can be found in: European Commission, EuropeAid, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

- **Specific** to the objective they are supposed to achieve;
- **Measurable**, from a quantitative and qualitative point of view;
- **Available** at an acceptable cost;
- **Relevant** to the information needs of managers;
- **Time-bound**.¹⁸⁰

Furthermore, it must be remembered that every indicator always relates only to one objective established in the project description, for example either to the overall objective, the purpose or one result or activity. Indicators vary according to the element they refer to (activities, results, scope or overall objective). Activity indicators evaluate the tangible and measurable outcomes of the planned activities. Indicators referring to a result evaluate the benefits that are generated by the project and that target a specific group of beneficiaries. Purpose indicators evaluate the project impact and the achievement of its objectives in the long-term period, whereas indicators that refer to the overall objective evaluate not only the outcomes of the entire project on the target group, but also its impact on indirect beneficiaries.¹⁸¹

Once indicators have been formulated, sources of verification should be specified in the third column in order to test whether the indicator can be realistically measured at the expense of a reasonable amount of time, money and effort. Sources of verification are considered at the same time as indicators, and their goal is to state whether indicators are valid and measurable tools. They give quantitative and qualitative information about the composition and structure of indicators, with the aim of ensuring that indicators do not require excessive effort or exaggerated costs. They often specify the format in which the information should be made available, who should provide the information and how regularly it should be provided. Typical examples of sources of verification can be attendance registers, questionnaires, surveys, interview, *ex post* evaluation activities, etc.

In conclusion, when designed properly, the Logframe matrix is a good instrument that helps to verify project consistency from activities to the overall objective and to identify contingent mistakes and weaknesses in the project implementation process. Its aim is, thus, to make the logical relationships between activities, results, purpose and overall objective more transparent: this is why it shall be exploited to provide structure and purpose to project planning and budgeting without being perceived as a rigid and restrictive blueprint¹⁸².

¹⁸⁰ M. D'Amico, *op. cit.*, p. 151.

¹⁸¹ I. Sgandurra, , *op. cit.*, p. 46-7.

¹⁸² ITAD Ltd. (Information Training and Agricultural Development), *op. cit.*, p. 22.

3. From Logframe matrix to Work Packages

After the Logframe matrix has been completed, further planning can take place to add operational details to the work plan by drawing up the so-called 'Work Packages' (WP). Work packages are activity schedules which present the activities of a project, identify their logical sequence and the contingent dependencies existing between them and constitute the base for sharing management responsibility for completing each activity.¹⁸³ Frequently, eForms ask applicants to provide detailed information about the internal structure of their projects, their external dimension (that is, their relationship with the EU funding programme, the stakeholders and beneficiaries) and the human and financial resources necessary for their implementation. For this reason, it is important to provide a detailed and organic description of the project activities, in particular by specifying their outcomes/outputs aimed at achieving the project overall objective and expected results. Applicants can be facilitated in this task if they make use of Work Packages, which can be created after having completed the Logframe Matrix. The matrix only provides an overview of the planned activities to be realised throughout the project life; therefore, once the project is financed, it is important to focus on planning the activities, and the use of WPs can help to elaborate a detailed, exhaustive description of each activity.

When we consider work packages we refer to a hierarchical diagram, a 'tree' focused on the outcomes and objectives (outputs/deliverables) of project activities and composed of different levels. Work packages consist of specific activities, and each activity is broken down into different elements providing useful information on the activity itself in order to make it more manageable and be organised easily. WPs break down each activity into different components which give information about: tasks, outputs and deliverables, milestones, roles and responsibilities of project managers/organisers, timetable, venues and financial resources. Tasks refer to the different 'pieces' that compose the overall activity, and each of them is generally assigned to a specific partner organisation. Timetable refers to the duration of each activity and is an important aspect to be considered since inaccuracy is a frequent mistake, usually resulting in an underestimate of the time required. Deliverables are the formal outputs/results of work packages, that is the material and immaterial outcomes of a specific activity realised throughout the project implementation. Milestones constitute the basis by which project implementation is monitored and managed: they are the major events that provide a measure of progress and a target for project organisers to aim at.¹⁸⁴ Milestones are included in a WP when during the activity realisation there can be identified one

¹⁸³ ITAD Ltd. (Information Training and Agricultural Development), *op. cit.*, p. 36.

¹⁸⁴ European Commission, EuropeAid, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

or more specific circumstances in which results that are essential for the continuation of the project activity are attained: these achievements are defined as ‘milestones’.

Moreover, Work packages are not employed only for the organisation of the activities, but they can also be a useful tool to be exploited to plan cross-cutting activities, notably those activities which often develop during the whole life-cycle of the project and which are linked to project management, dissemination, monitoring and evaluation. An example of the structure of work packages is shown in the table below:

WP1 - Name												
Duration in months:						Leading partner:						
Objective(s):												
Description of the work (tasks):												
Deliverable(s):												
Deliverable No	Deliverable name	Format	Language	Target Group	Month							
D.1												
D.2												
Costs budgeted for the work:												
Timeline:												
Month No	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Mark 'x'												

Figure 13. – Example of Wp structure¹⁸⁵

In conclusion, even though the eForm does not require an explicit list of work packages in any of its sections, it is useful to draw up work packages anyway, in order to develop a work plan which is as clear as possible¹⁸⁶ and which can help to keep in mind the key elements of each planned activity, such as duration, description, outputs and deliverables and distribution of the tasks among partner organisations.

¹⁸⁵ Table taken from: A. Bonifazi, A. Giannetti, *op. cit.*, p. 435.

¹⁸⁶ I. Sgandurra, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

After having completed the draft of work packages two more tables can be designed: a Gantt Chart and a list of all deliverables. On one hand the list of deliverables, produced throughout the realisation of the planned activities, helps to sketch out a comprehensive overview of the attained objectives and outputs. Indeed it is important to keep in mind all the project outputs to complete some sections of the eForm, in particular those asking to outline the expected results of planned actions, as well as those asking to define the pursued objectives of the project. An example of relevant information that could be included in the list of deliverables is provided in the table below:

Work Package	Deliverable N°	Deliverable name	Type of deliverable	Format	Language(s)	Target Group	Lead Participant	Dissemination level	Month of completion
WP1	D1.1		website	electronic	EN		Applicant organisation	Public	3
WP2	D2.1		Publication	Printed	National language		Partner 3	Public	6
	D2.2								

Figure 14. – List of deliverables

On the other hand the Gantt chart, commonly used in project management, is a useful way of showing activities displayed against time.

Project phase / Duration of the Project in months	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Work Package 1 - Name												
Work Package 2 - Name												
Work Package Task 2.1												
Work Package Task 2.2												
Work Package 3 - Name												
Work Package Task 3.1												
Work Package Task 3.2												
Work Package 4 - Name												
Etc....												

Figure 15. – Gantt chart

The box of the chart on the left provides the list of activities, divided into their respective tasks, and along the top there is a time scale. This type of chart is a practical tool which allows to see at a glance the start and end date of the entire project and the activity timetable, in particular when each activity begins and ends, how long it is scheduled to last and whether it overlaps with another one.

III. CASE STUDY: EUROPE FOR CITIZENS 2014-2020

CONTENTS: 1.Introduction: citizenship of the Union - 1.1.Provisions of the Treaties - 1.1.1.Articles 9-11 TEU - 1.1.2.Articles 20-5 TFEU - 1.2.Citizens' rights in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union - 1.3.The Citizens' Initiative - 1.4.Directive 2004/38/EC: freedom of movement and residence - 1.5.Final remarks - 2.Europe for Citizens Programme: a closer look - 2.1.Overview - 2.2.Strand 1: 'European remembrance' - 2.2.1.European Parliament Resolution on European conscience and totalitarianism - 2.2.2.Council Conclusions on the memory of the crimes committed by totalitarian regimes in Europe - 2.3.Strand 2: 'Democratic engagement and civic participation' - 3.Documents related to the programme - 3.1.Regulation - 3.2.Programme Guide and Annual Work Programme for 2015 - 3.3.eForm and annexes - 4.Example of a project proposal under measure 'Democratic engagement and civic participation'.

Chapter III is devoted to the development of a case study focused on a specific EU funding programme, that is the Europe for Citizens Programme 2014-2020. The programme encourages dialogue between civil society and EU institutions, as well as discussions about the importance of democratic and civic engagement in the European Union. The general objectives of the programme are the following: to contribute to citizens' understanding of the Union, its history and diversity and to foster European citizenship in order to improve conditions for civic and democratic participation at Union level. The primary purpose is, thus, to bring Europe closer to its citizens and to encourage them to participate in the strengthening of the Union. Through the projects funded by the programme citizens shall have the opportunity to be involved in transnational exchanges, contributing to developing a sense of belonging to common European ideals and strengthening the process of European integration.

The Chapter is divided into four macro-paragraphs. The first one investigates the issue of European citizenship and it analyses the main provisions set out in the Treaties and in Directive 2004/38/EC. The second macro-paragraph takes a closer look at the Europe for Citizens Programme and describes the two strands, 'European remembrance' and 'Democratic engagement and civic participation', into which the programme is divided. The third macro-paragraph analyses the documents relevant to the programme, notably the Regulation establishing Europe for Citizens, the Programme Guide, the Annual Work Programme for the current year (2015) and the eForm. The fourth macro-paragraph offers an example of a project proposal for Strand 2 of the Europe for Citizens Programme: the project proposal involves a transnational consortium of eleven applicant organisations engaged in the fields of education and youth (secondary schools, non-for-profit organisations and civil society organisations) and its activities target a number of youngsters between the age of 15 and 20 years old, with the ultimate aim of supporting debate on EU citizenship and young people's democratic and civic participation at Union level.

1. Introduction: citizenship of the Union

The significance of EU citizenship is difficult to grasp: although we usually use the adjective 'European' when we refer to cultural, political, economic aspects related to the European Union, a concrete point of reference able to clearly explain the term is still missing. When we think about Italian, French, Spanish or English people we have in mind a precise definition, rooted in the collective imagination and sometimes accompanied with some stereotypes and clichés, but when we talk about European citizenship, European institutions and European identity a margin of uncertainty and an intrinsic variability come to light¹⁸⁷. The European Union is not a perfectly cohesive community, it has a more complex identity which is often difficult to define and understand properly as it has some common ground, but at the same time it represents a unique variety of backgrounds, cultures, languages, values and traditions. The key idea that has characterised the process of European integration is the assimilation of citizens living in the different Member States: in fact, EU citizens residing in a host Member State should not be considered as foreigners and should enjoy, in that Member State, equal treatment with nationals. The pursued assimilation represents a key means to build a unitary and homogeneous space: the ultimate goal of European integration is, indeed, the identification of EU citizens into a wider community of populations represented by the Union¹⁸⁸. EU citizenship prohibits Member States from discriminating against the citizens of other EU countries, and its powerful impact lies thus in its contribution towards the creation of a common space of free movement in which citizens can enjoy the rights attached to European citizenship even when they cross the internal borders of the Union.

Despite its formal establishment in the Treaties, citizenship of the Union does not represent a consolidated tie between citizens and the Union yet, but it still needs to be strengthened. European identity cannot be built quickly, but it should be constructed and reinforced over time thanks to the role of EU institutions and the development of policies able to mould and enhance a set of common values.¹⁸⁹ It is a political process that needs to be cultivated day by day and in which the institutions should play a crucial role in providing citizens with the right channels and instruments to participate in the European policy-making process and, consequently, to feel part of the collective and democratic life of the Union.

The roots of European citizenship can be traced back to the provisions concerning the free movement of workers set out in the Treaties of Paris and Rome establishing respectively the

¹⁸⁷ P.S. Graglia, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

¹⁸⁸ R. Adam, A. Tizzano, *Lineamenti di diritto dell'Unione Europea*, Torino, Giappichelli, 2014, p. 377.

¹⁸⁹ M. Ferrera, M. Giuliani, *Governance e politiche dell'Unione Europea*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2008, p. 85-7.

European Coal and Steel Community and the European Economic Community. In particular, the free movement of workers, together with the free circulation of goods, services and capitals, was formally recognised in the Treaty of Rome¹⁹⁰ and qualified as an economic freedom. Among the founding countries of the ECSC and then of the EEC it was Italy, in the first place, that strongly supported the free movement of workers as an essential element for the construction of a common market.¹⁹¹ Since 1956 Germany got closer to Italian positions, aware of the fact that economic growth inevitably required the liberalisation of workers' movements. In the early 1970s the adoption of the Declaration on European Identity supported the intention of establishing common European rights in order to bring European institutions closer to its citizens and create a feeling of identification with the Community as a whole.¹⁹² Throughout that decade there were other reforms that strengthened the idea of a common European citizenship, such as in 1979 the first direct elections to the European Parliament and the Commission's draft directive on residence of nationals of the Member States in the territory of a different host country, and in 1981 the introduction of a uniform passport. However, although the right of free movement in the internal market and the possibility of taking part in the institutional life of the Community for those individuals who were nationals of a Member State had already been recognised¹⁹³, citizenship of the Union was formally established only in 1992 with the Treaty of Maastricht. Its establishment aimed at making the Community more legitimate and its benefits more tangible to the peoples of the Member States. European citizenship underwent further improvements with the Treaty of Lisbon, which brought about two substantial changes. First, the Treaty was intended to strengthen citizens' active participation in the democratic life of the Union, in particular by establishing citizens' power of initiative. Second, it was in the Lisbon Treaty that EU citizenship was directly associated with non-discrimination provisions in order to guarantee that Union citizens are not discriminated on the basis of their nationality¹⁹⁴ and receive equal treatment with nationals of the other Member States.

¹⁹⁰ C. Margiotta, *Cittadinanza europea. Istruzioni per l'uso*, Bari, Editori Laterza, 2014, p. 40.

¹⁹¹ C. Margiotta, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

¹⁹² European Commission, *Co-creating European Union Citizenship. Policy Review*, Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union, 2013, p. 20.

¹⁹³ B. Cortese, *Il rilievo della cittadinanza nel sistema dell'Unione Europea. L'interazione tra cittadinanze "nazionali" e cittadinanza dell'Unione*, p. 126-7, in L. Zagato, *Introduzione ai diritti di cittadinanza*, Venezia, Libreria Editrice Cafoscarina, 2011.

¹⁹⁴ C. Margiotta, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

In the following sections the significance of Union citizenship will be investigated and the rights that derive from its entitlement, set out by EU primary and secondary legislation, will be outlined and analysed.

1.1. Provisions of the Treaties on EU citizenship

EU citizenship is regulated by the provisions laid down in the Treaties and in Chapter V of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. In the following two paragraphs the analysis concentrates on Articles 9-11 of the Treaty on European Union and Articles 20-5 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, whereas paragraph 1.2. focuses on Articles 39-46 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

1.1.1. Articles 9-11 TEU

Starting with the provisions set out in the Treaty on European Union, Article 9 formally establishes citizenship of the Union:

*'Every national of a Member State shall be a citizen of the Union. Citizenship shall be additional to and not replace national citizenship'*¹⁹⁵.

Since nationals of the Member States are also citizens of the Union and EU citizenship is additional to national citizenship, it is clear that Member States have an exclusive competence in granting national citizenship and, consequently, Union citizenship. The power to decide who is granted national citizenship and who is not is up to the Member State in its own territory, and it cannot be questioned by the other Member States.¹⁹⁶ As claimed in the 1992 *Micheletti* judgement, it is not permissible for the legislation of Member States to restrict the effects of the grant of the nationality of another Member State by imposing additional conditions for recognition of that nationality¹⁹⁷. In that case the question revolved around whether Mr. Micheletti, who had Argentine and Italian nationality and wanted to settle as a dentist in Spain, could be refused permanent residency by the Spanish authorities. The European Court of Justice stated that the competence to regulate nationality belongs to Member States, and Spain had to accept Italian nationality rules, according to which a

¹⁹⁵ Article 9, Treaty on European Union.

¹⁹⁶ R. Adam, A. Tizzano, *Lineamenti di diritto dell'Unione Europea*, op. cit., p. 381.

¹⁹⁷ Case C-369/90 *Mario Vicente Micheletti and Others v Delegación del Gobierno en Cantabria* [1992] ECR I-4262, at para. 10.

person could acquire Italian nationality by being born from Italian parents. Still in the *Micheletti* case, the Court also clarified that Member States have to comply with Community law when they exercise their prerogatives in the sphere of citizenship. This means that Member States can lay down their own conditions for the acquisition and loss of nationality, but in doing this they shall have due regard not only to international law, but also to European law. From this statement it follows that EU law can interfere with the powers of Member States in the field of citizenship and can impose limits to their autonomy. As EU case-law has demonstrated, limits to the conditions for the acquisition and loss of citizenship come into play when national law, on this subject, influences negatively the entitlement or exercise of rights recognised to citizens by EU law.¹⁹⁸ Since the *Micheletti* judgment the ECJ reaffirmed this position in other cases by arguing that Member States must regulate the grant of national citizenship and consequently European citizenship, but that competence should be exercised in accordance with EU rules. Thus, Member States are asked to evaluate their provisions, regulating the acquisition and loss of citizenship, in the light of European Union law because of the consequences these national rules may have for EU citizenship.¹⁹⁹ The position of the ECJ is also evident in the *Rottmann* case, in which the question revolved around whether Member States have the power to withdraw national citizenship and as a consequence Union citizenship. A national of the Republic of Austria, Dr. Rottmann, transferred his residence to Germany and applied for German nationality. He was granted German nationality and consequently lost Austrian nationality in accordance with Austrian law. However, one year later his naturalisation was withdrawn with retroactive effect since he had not disclosed the fact that he was the subject of judicial investigation in Austria. Thus, he lost German nationality because he had obtained it by deception. The Court concluded that Member States may withdraw their nationality, granted by way of naturalisation, when the person concerned has obtained it by deception, even if as a consequence he or she loses citizenship of the Union. However, the ECJ also added that in such cases this competence must always be exercised by the Member States in accordance with the principle of proportionality. Taking into account the conclusions of the Court in the *Rottmann* case, it is possible to deduce a peculiar *nexus* existing between national powers and EU rules. This relationship was cleverly described by Advocate General Maduro (always in the *Rottmann* case). Maduro affirmed the acquisition and loss of nationality and, therefore, of EU citizenship are not in themselves governed by European Union law, but the conditions for the acquisition and loss of nationality must be compatible with EU rules

¹⁹⁸ L. Daniele, *Diritto del mercato unico europeo: cittadinanza, libertà di circolazione, concorrenza, aiuti di stato*, II edizione, Milano, Giuffrè, 2012, p. 25-6.

¹⁹⁹ L. Montanari, *La cittadinanza in Europa: alcune riflessioni sugli sviluppi più recenti*, «Rivista AIC – Associazione Italiana Costituzionalisti», 2 (2012), p. 8.

and must respect the rights of European citizens²⁰⁰. Each State determines under its own law who are its nationals, however it must always have due regard to European Union law when it exercises its powers in the sphere of nationality. It is important to underline that this latter provision does not compromise the principle of international law according to which States have the power to lay down their own conditions for the acquisition and loss of nationality, but it rather supports the principle according to which, in respect of EU citizens, the exercise of that power is amenable to judicial review carried out in the light of European Union law²⁰¹.

Along with the formal establishment of EU citizenship in Article 9, Article 10(3) TEU claims that citizens have the right to participate in the democratic life of the EU and decisions shall be taken in an open and transparent manner. This rule urges that Union actions shall be undertaken as closely as possible to civil society so as to enhance a more genuine democratic participation in the European policy-making process. Moreover the provisions laid down in Article 10(3) constitute a joining link with the ones promoting citizens' collective and democratic participation in the Union affairs, set out in Article 11 TEU. Article 11 TEU is organised in four levels: the acknowledgement of an open dialogue between citizens and EU institutions, the identification of the pivotal role played by the Commission in the enhancement of this dialogue, the promotion of the practice of broad consultations with parties, and the recognition of citizens' power of initiative²⁰², which is actually the most outstanding improvement. In accordance with Article 11 paragraphs 1 and 2 TEU, citizens shall express and exchange their views in all areas of Union action and EU bodies shall develop an open, transparent and regular dialogue with civil society. In addition to this, Article 11(4) TEU establishes the power of the citizens' initiative, which is of crucial importance:

*'not less than one million citizens who are nationals of a significant number of Member States may take the initiative of inviting the European Commission, within the framework of its powers, to submit an appropriate proposal on matters where citizens consider that a legal act of the Union is required for the purpose of implementing the Treaties'*²⁰³.

Thus, citizens can participate in the Union democratic life through the organisation of a citizens' initiative (ECI), that is a procedure that gives them the possibility of directly approaching the

²⁰⁰ F. Forni, *Cittadinanza dell'Unione europea e condizione delle minoranze negli Stati membri*, «Il diritto dell'Unione Europea», 4 (2010), p. 837.

²⁰¹ Case C-135/08 *Janko Rottmann v Freistaat Bayern* ECR I-1488, at para. 48.

²⁰² M.C. Marchetti, *L'Europa dei cittadini. Cittadinanza e democrazia nell'Unione Europea*, Milano, Franco Angeli, 2015, p. 91.

²⁰³ Article 11, Treaty on European Union.

Commission and inviting it to submit a proposal for a Union legal act²⁰⁴. Article 11(4) TEU only establishes the power of initiative from citizens, whilst detailed conditions required for such citizens' initiatives are outlined in Regulation 211/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council and will be analysed in paragraph 1.3 of this section.

1.1.2. Articles 20-5 TFEU

Along with Articles 9-11 TEU further provisions regarding EU citizenship are laid down in Articles 20-5 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. Article 20(1) TFEU reaffirms the provisions set out in Article 9 TEU: citizenship of the Union is granted to every person that holds the nationality of a Member State, and it is additional to national citizenship and does not replace it. Moreover Article 20(2) claims that citizens of the Union enjoy a series of rights and, at the same time, they also have duties. Despite this statement no duty is actually outlined in the Treaties: Article 20(2) only provides a list of rights recognised to EU citizens, such as the right to move freely within the Union territory, the right to enjoy in the territory of a third country the protection of the diplomatic and consular authorities of any Member State, the right to vote and to petition the European Parliament and to address the institutions and advisory bodies of the Union. Thus, in concrete European citizenship provides the entitlement of certain rights and represents an enrichment, an empowerment of national citizenship without replacing it.²⁰⁵ According to Article 25(2) TFEU, the above-mentioned rights shall be strengthened by the Council acting unanimously in accordance with a special legislative procedure and with the consent of the European Parliament. EU citizens' rights are described in detail in Articles 21-4 TFEU.

First of all, Article 21 TFEU provides citizens of the Union with the right to move and reside freely in EU countries, and it is composed of three paragraphs: the first one establishing the right to move and reside freely within the Union; the second one affirming that the European Parliament and the Council can adopt provisions in order to support the right concerned; the third one providing that the Council, following a special legislative procedure, might adopt measures concerning social security and social protection.

It is important to highlight that Article 21(1) has direct effect. Its direct effect was, indeed, confirmed in the *Chen* case concerning a little child and her parents whose nationality was Chinese. Mrs Chen went to the UK when she was about six months pregnant, and after two month she went

²⁰⁴ Regulation (EU) No 211/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 February 2011 on the citizens' initiative, OJ L 65, 11.3.2011, p. 2.

²⁰⁵ U. Villani, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

to Ireland to give birth to her daughter, Catherine. Catherine obtained Irish nationality since, according to Irish legislation, any person born in that territory acquires Irish nationality. After that, Mrs Chen and her daughter returned in the UK: as she had given birth to her child in Ireland, Mrs Chen acquired the right to reside with Catherine in the UK. Initially, mother and daughter were refused a long-term residence permit on the grounds that the child was not exercising any EU law rights and her mother was not entitled to reside in the UK under EU law.²⁰⁶ In the end, the Court affirmed that the right to reside in the territory of a Member State is granted to every citizen of the EU in accordance with Article 21(1) TFEU: therefore, as a national of a Member State, Catherine was entitled to rely on Article 21(1). Since at her age she was not independent, the Court also addressed the issue whether the mother had the right to reside too. It concluded that the enjoyment by a young child of the right of residence necessarily implies that the child is entitled to be accompanied by the person who is his/her primary carer and that carer must be allowed to reside with the child in the host Member State for the duration of such residence.²⁰⁷ A similar line of reasoning was also followed in *Zambrano* concerning two Colombian parents residing in Belgium with their children who had Belgian citizenship, as the Court granted them the right of residence and the right to work in that country.²⁰⁸

Article 22 TFEU establishes citizens' right to vote and to stand as a candidate at municipal elections and in elections to the European Parliament in the Member State in which they reside and of which are not nationals, under the same conditions as nationals of that State. The Article only admits derogations if they are justified by problems specific to a Member State. The *raison d'être* of citizens' right to vote lies thus in the intention to promote citizens' democratic participation, giving them the possibility of contributing to Union political decisions on a local scale and to the choice of the members of the European Parliament.²⁰⁹ Detailed arrangements for the exercise of the right to vote and stand as a candidate in municipal elections by EU citizens are laid down in Council Directive 94/80/EC, which has been further adapted by Council Directives 96/30/EC and 2006/106/EC. With regard to Article 3 of the Council Directive 94/80/EC, citizens of the Union who reside in a Member State of which they are not nationals can exercise the above-mentioned rights if they satisfy the

²⁰⁶ E. Berry, M.J. Homewood, B. Bogusz, *EU Law. Text, Cases, and Materials*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013, p. 406.

²⁰⁷ Case C-200/02 *Kunqian Catherine Zhu, Man Lavette Chen v Secretary of State for the Home Department* ECR I-9969, at para. 45

²⁰⁸ B. Cortese, *Il rilievo della cittadinanza nel sistema dell'Unione Europea. L'interazione tra cittadinanze "nazionali" e cittadinanza dell'Unione*, p. 138, in L. Zagato, *op. cit.*

²⁰⁹ C. Morviducci, *I diritti dei cittadini europei*, II edizione, Torino, Giappichelli, 2014, p. 273.

same conditions that the State imposes on its own nationals²¹⁰. Taking into account the right to vote in elections to the European Parliament, the latest elections were held in 2014 and represented a 'test bed' for the Union in a period of widespread 'Euroscepticism' due to the financial crisis and the austerity measures adopted to tackle it. From an institutional point of view the 2014 elections saw for the first time the implementation of the provisions set out in the Lisbon Treaty, whilst, taking into consideration the issue of political communication, they represented the first elections held in the era of social media, which had been fully exploited by parties and EU institutions in an effort to overcome abstentionism. Nevertheless the elections confirmed scarce participation: average participation at Union level stood at 42,59%, and it was lower in comparison with participation in the European elections in 2009 (43%) and in 2004 (45,5%)²¹¹.

Article 23 TFEU claims that EU citizens are entitled of protection by the diplomatic or consular authorities of another Member State on the same conditions as the nationals of that State, in the territory of third countries. Decision 95/553/EC establishes the kind of protection that diplomatic or consular authorities could offer to EU citizens, for example assistance in case of death, serious accident or illness, arrest or detention, as well as for victims of violent crime relief and repatriation²¹².

Lastly, Article 24 TFEU grants the right of initiative in accordance with Article 10(4) TEU and the right to petition the European Parliament in accordance with Article 227 TFEU. As already explained, the right of initiative is the right to submit to the Commission a proposal on matters where EU citizens consider a legal act of the EU is necessary for the purpose of implementing the Treaties. Such initiatives must be supported by at least one million EU citizens who are nationals of at least seven different Member States. As far as the right to petition is concerned, it must be remembered that before being formally introduced in the Treaty of Maastricht this right had been laid down in Article 128 of the internal Regulation of European Parliament, adopted in 1981 with the aim of improving its internal functioning and strengthening the influence of its advice and amendments.²¹³ According to Article 128 every citizen of the Community had the right to ask questions or address written

²¹⁰ Council Directive 94/80/EC of 19 December 1994 laying down detailed arrangements for the exercise of the right to vote and to stand as a candidate in municipal elections by citizens of the Union residing in a Member State of which they are not nationals, OJ L 368, 31.12.1994, p. 3.

²¹¹ The percentages were taken from: M.C. Marchetti, *L'Europa dei cittadini. Cittadinanza e democrazia nell'Unione Europea*, op. cit., p. 53.

²¹² E. Berry, M.J. Homewood, B. Bogusz, *op. cit.*, p. 419.

²¹³ C. Morviducci, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

complains to the European Parliament. The provision was reinforced, first, by the Treaty of Maastricht and, recently, by Article 10(4) of the TEU and Article 227 of the TFEU, which affirms that:

*'any citizen of the Union shall have the right to address a petition to the European Parliament on a matter which comes within the Union's fields of activity and which affects him, her or it directly'*²¹⁴.

Thus, the right to petition puts into contact individuals and the Parliament. On one hand it allows citizens to address requests and/or complaints affecting them directly and to urge the intervention of the EU institutions; on the other hand through the submission of petitions the Parliament can have available a clear overview of the needs and concerns of EU citizens.²¹⁵

1.2. Citizens' rights in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union

In June 1999 the European Council concluded that, despite the existence of a common ground in fundamental rights protection across Europe, there still existed differences in the respect of specific rights in the different Member States, and the fundamental rights applicable at European level thus should have been consolidated in a charter in order to give them greater visibility. The charter was drawn up by a convention consisting of representatives from Member States and the European Commission, as well as from members of the European Parliament and national parliaments, and it was formally proclaimed in Nice in December 2000. Later on, with the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009, the charter was given binding legal effect equal to the Treaties. The aim of the charter is to collect in a single document rights that could be found in a range of legislative acts, such as in national and EU laws, as well as in international conventions from the Council of Europe, the United Nations and the International Labour Organisation. Although it does not extend the competences of the EU, the charter gives them a new 'soul' by concentrating on the rights enjoyed by individuals with regard to all Union policies²¹⁶: indeed an important aspect specified in its preamble is that it places the individual at the heart of Union activities. The charter is composed of seven Chapters, and the fifth one is specifically devoted to citizens' rights (Articles 39-46).

Article 39 establishes citizens' right to vote and stand as candidates at elections to the European Parliament in the Member State where they reside, under the same conditions as nationals of that State, whereas Article 40 establishes their right to vote and stand as candidates at municipal

²¹⁴ Article 227, Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

²¹⁵ C. Morviducci, *op. cit.*, p. 81-2.

²¹⁶ European Parliament, *Fundamental Rights in the European Union. The role of the Charter after the Lisbon Treaty*, p. 3: <file:///C:/Users/Utente/Downloads/QA0415229ENN_002.pdf> [Accessed: 18/09/2015].

elections. Article 41 affirms the right to good administration. According to this provision, citizens enjoy, above all, the right to have their affairs handled impartially and fairly by the institutions, bodies, offices or agencies of the European Union. This right has different implications as it involves both citizens' right to be heard before any individual measure affecting them is taken and to have access to their files. In addition, citizens are recognised the right to be liable for damages caused by EU institutions and the right to write to the EU institutions in one of the languages of the Treaties, specified in Article 55(1) TEU²¹⁷, and to receive an answer in the same language. In accordance with Article 42 citizens have the right to access to the documents of the EU institutions, agencies, bodies and offices. Article 43 establishes the right to consult the European Ombudsman in case of maladministration in the activities of the EU institutions, bodies, agencies and offices. The final provisions set out in Chapter V reaffirm the rights outlined in the Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union: Article 44 of the Charter establishes the right to petition, Article 45 establishes the freedom of movement and residence in the territory of the Member States and Article 46 establishes the right to diplomatic and consular protection of any Member State in the territory of third countries where the Member State of which the individual is a national is not represented.

The binding legal effect of the Charter has marked a new era in which fundamental rights are increasingly taken into consideration in the legislative procedures of EU institutions and in the case-law of the European Courts.²¹⁸ Protecting fundamental rights is not simply a legal exercise, but it shall be the core of EU policies to consolidate a body of common values, so as to strengthen a sense of identity and community among the peoples of Europe, which in turn might reinforce EU political legitimacy.

1.3. The Citizens' Initiative

The ECI represents a new instrument in the framework of civic and democratic participation²¹⁹: it is a direct, transnational and digital form of democratic engagement promoting a new approach to citizens' participation in principle. The procedures and conditions required for citizens' initiatives are

²¹⁷ According to Article 55(1), the TEU is drawn up in a single original in the Bulgarian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Irish, Italian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Maltese, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish and Swedish languages, and the texts in each of these languages are equally authentic.

²¹⁸ European Parliament, *op. cit.*, p. 24:
<file:///C:/Users/Utente/Downloads/QA0415229ENN_002.pdf> [Accessed: 18/09/2015].

²¹⁹ M.C. Marchetti, *L'iniziativa dei cittadini europei (Icc)*. *Un anno di monitoraggio*, «La cittadinanza europea», 1 (2014), p. 94.

laid down in Regulation (EU) No 211/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 February 2011 on the citizens' initiative²²⁰.

The organisers of a citizens' initiative must form a committee composed of at least seven persons living in different Member States. The first step is to register the proposed citizens' initiative with the Commission, providing relevant information about the subject, the objectives and background, the source of support and funding of the initiative, as well as personal information about the seven members of the committee. Once the organisers have submitted their proposal, the Commission shall register it and send them a confirmation. The second step is to collect statements of support, which can be done in paper form or electronically (if they are collected electronically the Regulation sets out specific conditions to comply with, such as the collection of data through an online system stored in the territory of a Member State). The third step is to verify and certificate the collected statements of support: after their collection, they must be submitted to the relevant authorities of one Member State for verification and certification. The chosen Member State can be either the State of residence or nationality of the signatory, or the State that released the personal identification number or document indicated in the statement of support.²²¹ Once the organisers have obtained the certificates, they can submit the citizens' initiative to the Commission for examination and, according to Article 11 of the Regulation, they might be given the opportunity to present their initiative at a public hearing, which often takes place at the European Parliament with a delegation from the Commission and which is open to all the other EU bodies and institutions that want to participate.

Since 2012 the European Commission has received fifty-one requests for registration of citizens' initiatives. Thirty-one of them were registered, but in the end only three obtained the needed quantity of statements of support and were presented to the Commission: 'Right2Water', 'One of us' and 'Stop vivisection'.²²² These three initiatives put forward requests on matters where the Commission has powers to act under the Treaties and where the subsidiarity and proportionality principles were respected, while the other proposed initiatives did not fulfil all the registration criteria. The first initiative, 'Right2Water', was submitted in 2013 calling for legislation implementing the right to water and sanitation recognised by the United Nations, with the intent to provide water and sanitation as fundamental public services for all individuals. The second initiative, 'One of us',

²²⁰ Annex I of this Regulation has been amended by Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 268/2012 of 25 January 2012.

²²¹ Regulation (EU) No 211/2011, OJ L 65, 11.3.2011, p. 6.

²²² Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the application of Regulation (EU) No 211/2011 on the citizens' initiative, COM(2015) 145 final, p. 3.

calls for the EU to stop financing the activities that entail the destruction of human embryos, especially in the fields of research, development aid and public health. The third initiative, 'Stop vivisection', urges the Commission to abrogate Directive 2010/63/EU on the protection of animals used for a scientific purpose and to submit a proposal that abolishes animal experimentation and suggests instead the use of data directly relevant for the human species in biomedical and toxicological research.

In 2015 the Commission has elaborated a report on the application of Regulation (EU) No 211/2011 on the citizens' initiative (COM(2015) 145 final), in which it assesses the implementation of the ECI since 2012 and analyses the feedback received from stakeholders and organisers of citizens' initiatives, as well as information gathered from Member States. At the end of this Report the Commission draws its own conclusions about the ECI implementation. In particular, it states that the ECI instrument has been successfully implemented as some proposed initiatives have managed to complete the entire procedure of an ECI, from registration through collection of the required statements of support to the formal reply of the Commission. However, the Commission is aware of the fact that further improvements are needed: according to the Report the major challenge remains the registration with the Commission, since a number of proposed ECIs focused on matters that were outside the scope of the institution's competences²²³. Even though it is still early to assess the long-term impacts of the ECI, some stakeholders have already defined the ECI a weak instrument of participation and claimed that calling such an instrument a 'citizen initiative' is misleading, paradoxically contributing to the suspicion of the Union's unwillingness to concretely enable citizens to take part in the European decision-making process²²⁴. Organisers, stakeholders and the Commission itself have highlighted several weaknesses to be tackled in the following years. The complexity of the current certification procedure remains critical, and some ECI organisers are not fully satisfied with the features offered by the Commission software. Furthermore, it has been noted there is still insufficient dialogue and interaction with the Commission at different stages of the ECI's life-cycle, and in particular after the adoption of the Commission's Communication on the citizens' initiative.

In conclusion, the procedures established by Regulation (EU) No 211/2011 give citizens the possibility of taking part in the policy-making process directly through the organisation of a citizens'

²²³ Report on the application of Regulation (EU) No 211/2011 on the citizens' initiative, COM(2015) 145 final, p. 14.

²²⁴ A. B. de Witte, H.A. Trechsel, D. Damjanović, E. Hellquist, J. Hien, P. Ponzano, *Legislating after Lisbon. New Opportunities for the European Parliament*, Florence, European Union Democracy Observatory, 2010, p. 18, in M. C. Marchetti, *L'iniziativa dei cittadini europei (Ice). Un anno di monitoraggio*, op. cit., p. 108.

initiative, and, consequently, the possibility of developing an open dialogue with the EU institutions and contributing to the enhancement of the Union democratic and civic life. Although its long-term impacts cannot be assessed concretely yet, the ECI, designed to enhance active citizenship and participation, remains a key institutional means which has the potential for upgrading the democratic life of the Union, but certainly needs to be improved.

1.4. Directive 2004/38/EC: freedom of movement and residence

The entitlement of EU citizenship encompasses the grant of several rights, among which the right of free movement and residence within the Union territory and the enjoyment of equal treatment with nationals of the host Member State take on a leading position.²²⁵ Directive 2004/38/EC has substituted a number of previous legal texts in an effort to clarify and simplify the legislation on the subject concerned. The aim is to facilitate and strengthen the exercise of the free movement and residence rights in the territory of the Member States, rights already envisaged in the provisions laid down in the TFEU. Thus, the directive shall be seen as a valuable means for the reconstruction of the present legislation on the freedom of movement and residence enjoyed by EU citizens, which draws inspiration from the main indications of the ECJ and rationalises the previous muddled institutional and regulatory framework.²²⁶

Chapter II of the Directive recognises the right of exit and of entry from and to a Member State (Articles 4-5): citizens with a valid identity card or passport and their family members with a valid document of identification can entry or leave the territory of a Member State. The right of entry and residence is also granted to those family members who are not nationals of a EU country, if they hold a valid passport. Moreover, the Directive grants the right of residence for up to three months. EU citizens who are granted the right of residence for more than three months can be, first, workers or self-employed individuals. If citizens do not work, they can reside in the territory of a host Member State for up to three months if they have sufficient resources for themselves and their family and have medical insurance not to become a burden on the social assistance system of the host Member State during their period of residence. Alternatively, citizens that enjoy this right are also students, enrolled at a private or public establishment to follow a course of study (including vocational training), who have sickness insurance cover and sufficient resources for themselves and their family.

²²⁵ S. Amadeo, *Il principio di eguaglianza e la cittadinanza dell'Unione: il trattamento del cittadino europeo inattivo*, «Il diritto dell'Unione Europea», 1 (2011), p. 59.

²²⁶ C. Morviducci, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

Lastly, the right of residence for up to three months is also recognised to family members accompanying or joining a Union citizen who satisfies the conditions mentioned above.

The Directive does not oblige EU citizens to register, but it allows the host Member State to bind them to register with its relevant authorities for periods of residence longer than three months. In contrast, family members coming from third countries are compelled directly by the Directive to apply for the issue of a residence card. Those obligations aim at ensuring that the right of free movement granted to EU citizens and their family members does not transform itself in a financial burden on the social assistance system of the host Member State during their period of residence.²²⁷ For this reason, the host Member States may require citizens to register with the relevant authorities, and for the registration certificate to be issued they may require specific documents. As far as workers or self-employed individuals are concerned, they must present a valid identity card or passport, a confirmation of engagement from the employer or a certificate of employment or proof that they are self-employed persons. Citizens who are not workers, but want to reside in the host Member State for more than three months must present a valid identity card or passport and provide proof that they have a medical insurance and sufficient resources for themselves and their family members. Students enrolled at a private or public establishment present a valid identity card or passport, provide proof of enrolment at that establishment and of sickness insurance cover and provide proof that they have sufficient resources for themselves and their family members. Finally, family members accompanying or joining a Union citizen must present a valid identity card or passport, a document attesting to the existence of a family relationship or of a registered partnership and, if appropriate, the registration certificate of the Union citizen whom they are accompanying or joining.²²⁸ When the Directive refers to 'family members' while establishing provisions on the right of free movement and residence, it means:

- the spouse;
- the partner with whom the Union citizen has contracted a registered partnership, on the basis of the legislation of a Member State, if the host Member State law considers registered partnerships as equivalent to marriage and in accordance with the conditions laid down by the relevant legislative rules of the host Member State;

²²⁷ R. Adam, A. Tizzano, *Manuale di diritto dell'Unione Europea*, Torino, Giappichelli, 2014, p. 415.

²²⁸ Directive 2004/38/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on the right of citizens of the Union and their family members to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States amending Regulation (EEC) No 1612/68 and repealing Directive 64/221/EEC, 68/360/EEC, 72/194/EEC, 73/148/EEC, 75/34/EEC, 75/35/EEC, 90/364/EEC, 90/365/EEC and 93/96/EEC, OJ L 158, 30.4.2004, p. 20-1.

- the direct descendants who are under the age of 21 or are dependants and those of the spouse or partner;
- the dependent direct relatives in the ascending line and those of the spouse or partner.²²⁹

Thus, the Directive takes into account a wider notion of 'family members', which also includes the partner with whom the EU citizen has contracted a registered partnership. Although the acknowledgement of partners as family members is established, this provision is, however, still subject to some specific conditions in order to comply with different traditions existing in Member States and with the model of family they officially recognise: registered partnerships must be an established practice both in the citizen's country of origin and in the host Member State, and the legislation of the host Member State must treat registered partnerships as equivalent to marriage.

In Chapter IV the Directive contains provisions on the right of permanent residence, granted to those citizens who have resided legally for a continuous period of five years in a host Member State. Continuous period means that continuity of residence is not affected by temporary absences, which must not exceed six months per year, or by absences of a longer duration for compulsory military service or by one long absence which must not exceed twelve consecutive months for important reasons such as pregnancy and childbirth, illness, study or vocational training. Chapter V sets out provisions common to the right of residence and the right of permanent residence. First, these rights cover the entire territory of the host Member States. Second, Member States can impose territorial restrictions on the right of residence and of permanent residence only when the same restrictions are applied to their own national citizens. Third, all citizens shall enjoy equal treatment with the nationals of the host Member State.

Chapter VII outlines restrictions on the right of entry and the right of residence on grounds of public policy, public security and public health. Restrictions taken on grounds of public policy and public security must be based on the personal conduct of the individual concerned, while restrictions on grounds of public health can be taken if Member States face the spread of diseases with epidemic potential or other infectious diseases or contagious parasitic diseases.

As far as the adoption of the Directive 2004/38/EC is concerned, a recent report of the Commission has revealed that several Member States have not adopted and acknowledged the directive in the right way, especially with regard to the rules concerning the residence of EU citizens' family members who are not nationals of a Member State, and that only Cyprus, Greece, Spain,

²²⁹ Directive 2004/38/EC, OJ L 158, 30.4.2004, p. 12.

Malta, Finland, Luxembourg and Portugal have transposed most of its provisions effectively and correctly.²³⁰

1.5. Final remarks

The relationship between national citizenship and citizenship of the Union is explained by the very nature and significance of the latter. While nationality is traditionally understood as a legal and political *status* enjoyed by the nationals of a State within their body politic, European citizenship refers to the legal and political *status* conferred to the nationals of a State beyond their State body politic. EU citizenship provides citizens with a number of rights (in particular the right of movement and residence and the right to equal treatment), which they can assert in all the Member States and also with regard to the Union as a whole. As underlined in the previous sections, EU citizenship has been enhanced and has assumed 'constitutional importance' gradually. From an era of 'market citizenship' to the present day this institution has changed significantly. Of crucial importance have been the judgements of the European Court of Justice, the adoption of Directive 2004/38/EC, the Lisbon Treaty's provisions fostering citizens' active participation in the Union democratic life and the legally binding Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.

However, despite the progressive strengthening of EU citizenship there is a deficit in its implementation and exercise, a gap between legal provisions and reality, as the European Union is still populated by citizens unaware of being part of a transnational reality that exists beyond the borders of their own State²³¹. In order to overcome this 'institutional divide' it is fundamental to increase the visibility of EU citizenship and raise awareness of the rights that citizens enjoy from its entitlement. For this reason, the Commission designated 2013 as the European Year of Citizens, an occasion aimed at putting citizens at the heart of Union affairs. The decision to devote one of the European years to European citizenship is part of the Commission's project of including the issue among the priorities of the Union's political Agenda²³², with the ultimate aim of encouraging practices, dialogue and experiences that support a growing awareness of EU citizens' *status* and of the rights they enjoy.

²³⁰ L. Zagato, *Cittadini a geometria variabile*, p. 249, in L. Zagato, *op. cit.*

²³¹ M.C. Marchetti, *L'Europa dei cittadini. Cittadinanza e democrazia nell'Unione Europea*, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

²³² G. Giraudi, *La cittadinanza dell'UE tra 'dialogo civilizzatore' tra cittadinanze nazionali e rappresentanza politica non competitiva*, «I quaderni europei – Serie speciale: Diritti e cittadinanza nell'Unione Europea», 6 (2014), p. 42: <http://www.cde.unict.it/quadernieuropei/speciale/6_2014.pdf> [Accessed: 16/09/2015]

Citizenship of the Union has been usually conceived through the lens of national citizenships and associated to a vague, loose concept merely complementing nationality of EU countries. In reality EU citizenship is not a *status* intended to resemble national citizenship, but it is built on different premises: while national citizenship relates to peoples' rootedness, EU citizenship is linked to citizens' mobility and to border crossings. The roots of EU citizenship can be traced back to those provisions laid down in the Treaties of Paris and Rome which concerned the free movement of workers within the Community territory. From that moment mobility has been increasingly encouraged since it is a valuable asset, a source of strength for economy and society as well as for human beings. Consequently citizenship of the Union has taken on greater significance: indeed the conditions on which the freedom of movement may now depend are not exclusively economic in nature²³³, as EU citizenship is also about the enhancement of a common political and social space that institutions, governments and citizens co-create together. This explains why the exercise of the free movement rights granted by EU law poses some limits to the autonomy of Member States over issues such as the grant of entry and residence rights to EU nationals and their family members. As Advocate General Maduro noted at the ECJ,

*'citizenship of the Union shall encourage State to no longer conceive of the legitimate link of integration only within the narrow bonds of the national community, but also within the wider context of the society of peoples of the Union'*²³⁴.

Although citizenship has traditionally implied the existence of a juridical and political tie between the individual and the State, with the establishment of European citizenship the concept has proven to be more complex and ambiguous. The major challenge originating from the formal establishment of EU citizenship is to build and strengthen over time a new political and juridical space, that is an aggregation of States where citizens of different nationalities can feel equal and enjoy the same rights. European countries need to embrace and harness diversity in order to build a pluralistic identity at the basis of a European model of open and inclusive society.²³⁵ In the light of this, the process of European integration and enlargement is strictly linked to the necessity of increasing

²³³ G. Giraudi, *op. cit.*, p. 46: <http://www.cde.unict.it/quadernieuropei/speciale/6_2014.pdf> [Accessed: 16/09/2015].

²³⁴ Point 23 of AG Maduro's opinion, *Nerkowska*, 28 February 2008, in European Commission, *Co-creating European Union Citizenship. Policy Review*, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

²³⁵ L. Moccia, *Education to 'Inter-Cultural Citizenship': A European Perspective to Global Citizenship*, «La cittadinanza europea», 2 (2014), p. 162.

awareness of the significance of EU citizenship and fostering a sense of belonging to a common Union territory. In fact, using the words of the EJC in the *Grzelczyk* judgement,

*'Union citizenship is destined to be a fundamental status of nationals of the Member States, enabling those who find themselves in the same situation to enjoy the same treatment in law irrespective of their nationality'*²³⁶.

In conclusion, European citizenship entails the existence of a relationship between European citizens and bodies, and it is not an institution of belonging to a specific people. On the contrary, it is a political and juridical tie uniting the peoples of Europe and based on their mutual commitment to open their respective bodies politic to citizens of other Member States and to construct a new form of civic and political allegiance on a European scale.²³⁷

2. Europe for Citizens Programme: a closer look

The European Union is made of its citizens and for its citizens, thus encouraging and facilitating their involvement in the Union life is of great importance. The Lisbon Treaty led to a number of changes with the aim of bringing the EU closer to its citizens and stimulating debate about Union policy actions. Article 11 TEU has, in fact, introduced a new dimension of participatory democracy, making European citizenship a key element in the process of European integration; moreover the Commission has been fostering citizens' engagement in Union affairs so that they can take part in the construction of a stronger Europe directly. In this context, the Europe for Citizens Programme was conceived as an instrument for the promotion of European history, diversity and values, as well as for the promotion of citizens' active engagement in the EU policy-making process. The following paragraphs will provide a more detailed description of the programme through the analysis of its general features and objectives and the different measures it finances.

2.1. Overview

Democratic and civic participation has always been a concern for the EU, as well as an aspect of its past and current political agenda, and nowadays there is a growing awareness of the fact that 'active citizenship' represents a key element in the strengthening and safeguard of the European integration

²³⁶ Case C-184/99 *Grzelczyk v Centre public d'aide social d'Ottignies-Louvain-la-Neuve* [2001] ECR I-6193, at para. 31.

²³⁷ Opinion of AG Maduro delivered on 30 September 2009 in Case C-135/08 *Janko Rottmann v Freistaat Bayern*, I-1460.

process²³⁸. In fact, the missed adoption of a European Constitution highlighted the need to take decisive political actions to strengthen citizens' participation and engagement at Union level. Among these actions a new programme concerning European citizenship and civic engagement, the 'Europe for Citizens Programme', was launched in 2006 and established for the period 2007-2013 by Decision 1904/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council.

The programme started in 2007 with the aims of putting into practice a wide range of initiatives for EU citizens and of supporting private and public bodies in the promotion of active citizenship at Union level. Europe for Citizens 2007-2013 financed four different actions: 'Active citizens for Europe' whose aim was to share experiences, opinions and values across Europe, 'Active civil society in Europe' supporting civil society organisations at European, national and local level, 'Together for Europe' with the aim of reducing the gap between EU institutions and citizens and 'Active European Remembrance' to raise awareness of Europe's history and past.

A mid-term evaluation of the Europe for Citizens Programme 2007-2013 underlined the relevance of the programme, which was able to provide EU citizens with valuable and concrete opportunities to interact with EU institutions. Consequently, the mid-term evaluation suggested the preparation of a successor programme: such a successor programme was put forward by the Commission in 2011 through a proposal for a Council Regulation establishing the European for Citizens Programme for the period 2014-2020 (COM(2011) 884 final). Thanks to the Commission's proposal calling for a continuation of the programme (with some changes and improvements), a Council Regulation establishing the new programme was adopted in 2014: Regulation (EU) No 390/2014 of 14 April 2014.

Europe for Citizens 2014-2020 is based on the achievement of the following goals: to raise awareness of remembrance and history of the Union, to promote peace, Union values and the well-being of its people and to encourage democratic and civic participation at Union level by supporting citizens' understanding of the policy-making process and by promoting opportunities for societal and intercultural engagement and volunteering²³⁹. The programme for the 2014-2020 period is characterised by some key features. First, it promotes the principle of equal access as it is accessible to all European citizens without any form of discrimination. Second, a key aspect of EU projects funded under Europe for Citizens shall be their transnationality: a project can be defined 'transnational' if it tackles an issue from a European perspective or if it compares different national

²³⁸ M. J. Prutsch, *Europe for Citizens (2014-2020)*, Brussels, Policy Department B: Structural and Cohesion Policies, 2012, p. 13.

²³⁹ Regulation (EU) No 390/2014 of the European Council of 14 April 2014 establishing for the period 2014-2020 the programme 'Europe for Citizens', OJ L 115, 17.4.2014, p. 4.

points of view, or if it involves a series of partner organisations coming from different countries. Third, the programme shall contribute to intercultural dialogue by giving citizens with different national backgrounds the opportunity to share a common experience. Finally, volunteering is another key element implemented by the programme, as it plays a crucial role in supporting active citizenship and in developing a sense of belonging to a community.

Europe for Citizens 2014-2020 has been implemented through two specific strands and a horizontal action: Strand 1 'European remembrance', whose aim is to raise awareness of Europe's past, history and values; Strand 2 'Democratic engagement and civic participation', which fosters democratic and civic participation and consists of three additional measures (Town Twinning, Networks of Towns and Civil Society Projects); Horizontal Action 'Valorisation' concerning analysis, dissemination and use of projects results. As an indication, the overall budget for the Europe for Citizens Programme is divided between the different actions as it follows: Strand 1 20%, Strand 2 60% and horizontal action 10%, with a remaining amount of money allocated to cover technical expenses²⁴⁰. The programme is managed jointly by the Commission and the EACEA. The former (and in particular the DG COMM) is in charge of the financial management, the establishment of overall objectives, priority areas, targets and implemented criteria for project selection and evaluation. The latter is in charge of the management of the entire lifecycle of funded projects, from calls for proposals to project selection, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. In addition, the Commission has established some 'Europe for Citizens Contact Points' (ECPs)²⁴¹ with the aim of giving relevant information about the programme to interested stakeholders and providing them with guidance and support.

Taking into account the selection process, the Commission applies the following criteria for all the funded measures in order to choose which projects must be selected: eligibility, exclusion, selection and award criteria. As far as the eligibility criteria are concerned, applicants must be either public entities or non-for-profit organisations with legal personality coming from one of the participating countries. In particular, applicants for civil society projects must be either non-for-profit organisations (civil society organisations included) or public educational and cultural institutions or, only as partners, public local/regional authorities or town twinning committees. As far as the exclusion criteria are concerned, applicants have to submit a declaration on honour, attached to the

²⁴⁰ Percentages taken from: Regulation (EU) No 390/2014, OJ L 115, 17.4.2014, p. 9.

²⁴¹ The Europe for Citizens Point-Italy was established in 2008 at the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism. See: Osservatorio finanziamenti Ue - Il Sole 24 ore
<<http://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/economia/2014-12-23/europa-i-cittadini-via-presentazione-progetti-le-priorita-2015-111908.shtml?uuiid=ABoSZIUC>> [Accessed: 01/09/2015]

eForm, not to be excluded from the selection process. Taking into consideration the selection criteria, eligible project proposals are evaluated with regard to the financial and operational capacity of the applicant organisations. Financial capacity means the applicant owns sufficient resources to carry out the project, whereas operational capacity means the applicant has the capacities and motivation to implement it concretely. Finally, as far as the award criteria are concerned, they are implemented to evaluate the quality of submitted project proposals and their relevance for the programme objectives. More specifically, all Europe for Citizens project proposals are evaluated according to the following criteria: 30% consistency with the programme objectives; 35% quality of the activity plan; 15% dissemination; 20% impact²⁴². Civil Society project proposals must comply with an additional criterion, as they must include at least two of the following three types of activities:

1. activities linked to the European political agenda and policy-making process and promoting debate or actions on the themes of common interest in the larger framework of the rights and responsibilities of EU citizens;
2. activities gathering the individual opinions of citizens on specific topics, including the use of social networks and webinars;
3. activities spreading solidarity among EU citizens.²⁴³

Finally, some financial conditions regulating Europe for Citizens projects shall be considered. In particular, it must be remembered a set of compulsory rules applying to project financing: the co-financing principle as the EU does not finance the entire project; the principle of non-retroactivity and non-cumulative award, and, lastly, the no-profit principle as the awarded grant produces no profit and must be spent only on the project realisation.

2.2. Strand 1: 'European remembrance'

The first strand of the Europe for Citizens Programme, called 'European remembrance', finances initiatives aimed at encouraging reflection on European diversity and European common values. In particular, it supports those projects that reflect on totalitarian regimes in Europe (notably Nazism, Stalinism, Fascism and other totalitarian communist regimes) and commemorate the victims.

²⁴² Percentages taken from: Europe for Citizens Programme Guide, p. 15-6: <<https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/eacea-site/files/documents/comm2013003670000en.pdf>> [Accessed: 03/08/2015].

²⁴³ Europe for Citizens Programme Guide, p. 21: <<https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/eacea-site/files/documents/comm2013003670000en.pdf>> [Accessed: 03/08/2015].

Totalitarian regimes were crucial moments in Europe's modern history. Thus it is important to reflect on these events, understand their causes and foster peace, tolerance, intercultural dialogue, in particular by reaching the younger generation, as means to move beyond the past and build the future.²⁴⁴ The need to reflect on the past in order to build a stronger Europe for future generations is clearly stated in two documents which will be analysed in the following paragraphs: the European Parliament Resolution on European conscience and totalitarianism and the Council Conclusions on the memory of crimes committed by totalitarian regimes in Europe. These documents state the importance of preserving the memory of Europe's history and past, they also affirm the EU stand against any type of totalitarian regime, and they call for the implementation of financial instruments supporting actions and initiatives in the field of European remembrance.

2.2.1. European Parliament Resolution on European conscience and totalitarianism

The European Parliament Resolution of 2 April 2009 is focused on the issues of European conscience and totalitarianism. The Resolution claims that a proper safeguard and a comprehensive reconsideration of European historical memory and history, as well as the assessment of all historical aspects of modern Europe, could strengthen Union integration²⁴⁵. Moreover, the Resolution states its stand against any type of totalitarian regime: since the EU is based on rights such as democracy, freedom, equality, rule of law and human dignity, it must condemn any crime against humanity, as well as massive human rights violations like the ones committed by totalitarian regimes throughout the twentieth century. As affirmed in the Resolution, the European Union shall be a model of peace and reconciliation aimed at sharing a common peaceful future and safeguarding democracy and respect for human rights. For these reasons, the European Parliament asks the Commission and the Member States to make an effort to promote the teaching of Europe's history so as to raise awareness and highlight the decisive achievement of European integration. To fulfil this aim, the Parliament calls for a strengthening of the existing financial instruments that may support actions and initiatives raising awareness of European history and past, since the preservation and an appropriate reassessment of European historical memory will strengthen EU cohesion and integration process.

²⁴⁴ Europe for Citizens Programme Guide, p. 17:
<<https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/eacea-site/files/documents/comm2013003670000en.pdf>> [Accessed: 03/08/2015].

²⁴⁵ European Parliament Resolution of 2 April 2009 on European conscience and totalitarianism, P6_TA(2009)0213.

2.2.2. Council Conclusions on the memory of the crimes committed by totalitarian regimes in Europe

The Council of the European Union met in Luxembourg between 9th and 10th June 2011 to discuss about a broad range of issues, such as migration and asylum, cybercrime, counter-terrorism, EU accession to the European Convention on human rights. Among these issues the Council also adopted conclusions on the memory of crimes committed by totalitarian regimes in Europe. Those conclusions state the importance of raising awareness of the crimes committed by totalitarian regimes, as this can help to avoid a renewed spread of totalitarian ideologies.²⁴⁶ As claimed in the European Parliament's Resolution of 2 April 2009, which declares that there cannot be reconciliation without truth and remembrance, the Council Conclusions reaffirms that the EU is founded on the values of human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, rule of law and respect for human rights, and these values should be a landmark and a constant source of inspiration for all the Member States. Therefore, the Union shall support the memory of the crimes committed in the past, and the Council shall encourage Member States to conceive actions, projects and initiatives in order to raise awareness of Europe's past and history. To achieve this the Council welcomes the ideation and strengthening of EU funding programmes able to support such initiatives and it encourages the Commission to consider possibilities for research projects and grants in the fields of totalitarian regimes and European collective remembrance.

2.3. Strand 2: 'Democratic engagement and civic participation'

Citizenship is a political concept that can be traced back to the ancient world: it describes the relationship between individuals and political institutions, and it provides individuals with specific rights and duties.²⁴⁷ While citizenship has generally been understood as a link between individuals and a well-defined body politic, notably the State with its own population united by a common language and culture, the concept of European citizenship has been widely discussed and has posed several problems over time. The main problems stem from the elusiveness of the concept and the difficulty of defining common traits of European citizenship. In addition to this, the current political and economic situation has increased national rivalries and consolidated the idea that a supranational identity among peoples living in EU countries is difficult to achieve. Indeed, European

²⁴⁶ Council Conclusions of 9-10 June 2011 on the memory of the crimes committed by totalitarian regimes in Europe, 11008/11, p. 22.

²⁴⁷ M. J. Prutsch, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

citizenship has frequently been understood as a loose concept that is defined through national citizenships and merely complements them²⁴⁸.

In the recent years the perceived need for a growing awareness and engagement of citizens at Union level has been tackled by the European Union concretely, as one category of expense (heading) appointed in the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020 is devoted to 'Security and Citizenship' and, thus, it supports the financing of activities aimed at fostering information exchange and dialogue with EU citizens. Among the actions supported by the Union in the field of citizenship there is also the implementation of the Europe for Citizens Programme, which shall promote a culture of civic and democratic participation through its second strand called 'Democratic engagement and civic participation'. Strand 2 supports activities that foster civic and democratic participation in a broad sense: from initiatives linked to EU policies to activities encouraging citizens' participation in the policy-making process, opportunities for intercultural exchanges, volunteering initiatives and solidarity at Union level. Strand 2 pursues the above-mentioned purposes by providing financing to different actions: Town Twinning, Networks of Towns and Civil Society Projects. The Town Twinning measure finances projects aimed at bringing together citizens from twined towns in order to debate and discuss about concrete issues related to the EU political agenda. The Networks of Towns measure brings together municipalities and associations on a specific topic with the ultimate aim of developing a long-term network of towns that cooperate and exchange good practices. Lastly, Civil society project measure supports transnational cooperation projects involving citizens in multicultural exchanges and initiatives, aimed at developing a sense of belonging to common European ideals and supporting participation in the Union life.

In conclusion, this second strand of the Europe for Citizens Programme has been specifically conceived to stimulate a reflection on European citizenship through a bottom-up approach. The goal is to provide financing for a set of different instruments promoting transnational cooperation, exchange of good practices and experiences, volunteering and development of networks of towns across Europe, which are all actions able to encourage citizens' involvement in the policy-making process and in the political agenda of the European Union and, ultimately, to strengthen European citizenship.

3. Documents related to the programme

The documents that need to be read carefully in order to draw up a project proposal under Europe for Citizens are the Regulation establishing the programme, the Programme Guide, the Annual Work

²⁴⁸ M. J. Prutsch, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

Programme and the eForm to be filled before the submission of the project proposal. The documents in question will be analysed in the following paragraphs.

3.1. Regulation

Council Regulation (EU) No 390/2014 of 14 April 2014 establishes the ‘Europe for Citizens’ Programme for the period 2014-2020. The Regulation consists of seventeen articles and a complementary annex, and its legal basis lays on Article 352 TFEU. According to Article 352(1) TFEU, the Council, acting unanimously on a Commission’s proposal and with the consent of the European Parliament, can adopt appropriate measures to attain one of the objectives laid down in the Treaties. Thus, Article 352 TFEU provides for a special legislative procedure and confers the leading role to the Council while it gives the Parliament only the possibility of accepting or rejecting, but not amending the Council’s position²⁴⁹.

The Regulation establishing the Europe for Citizens Programme begins with Article 1 outlining the general objectives of the programme: the contribution to the understanding of the Union, its history and diversity and the strengthening of European citizenship and citizens’ democratic and civic participation at Union level. Article 2 lays down the specific objectives of the programme: to raise awareness of the Union’s history and values and to foster citizens’ democratic and civic participation. Article 3 describes the structure of the programme and the actions it supports. Two main strands can be envisaged: ‘European remembrance’ and ‘Democratic engagement and civic participation’. Along with these two strands there exists a horizontal action, named ‘Valorisation’, which concerns analysis, dissemination and use of projects results. Under the two strands the programme finances a series of different actions, such as citizens’ meeting, town-twinning, remembrance projects, Union level events, seminars and expert meetings, peer reviews or exchanges. Article 4 specifies the Union measures used by the programme, which can take the form of grants and public procurement contracts, whereas Article 5 states that participation in the programme is open to EU Member States, acceding countries, candidate countries and potential countries, and the EFTA (European Free Trade Association) countries, which are part of the EEA Agreement, notably Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.²⁵⁰ Access to the programme is declared, in Article 6, open to:

²⁴⁹ M. J. Prutsch, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

²⁵⁰ M. J. Prutsch, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

'all stakeholders promoting Union citizenship and integration, in particular local and regional authorities, twinning committees, civil society organisations, European public policy research organisations, and cultural, youth, educational and research organisations'²⁵¹.

Moreover, cooperation with international organisations, such as UNESCO or the Council of Europe, is possible on the basis of joint contributions and in accordance with the provisions laid down in the Financial Regulation. As far as the implementation of the programme is concerned, Article 8 establishes the adoption of annual work programmes by the Commission, which shall set out the pursued objectives, the expected results and the total amount available for the year in question. According to Article 9 the Commission shall be assisted by a committee, moreover it must have regular contacts with the beneficiaries of the programme, relevant partners and stakeholders (Article 10) and it must act in accordance both to other Union instruments in the field of education, training, youth, sport, media and culture and to the fundamental values of the Union (Article 11). The Europe for Citizens Programme has a planned budget of EUR 185 million for the period that goes from 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2020 (Article 12), and the means used by the EU to protect its financial interests are listed in Article 13. Article 14 states that the Commission must provide Member States with relevant information on the previous funded projects. In terms of monitoring and evaluation, the programme must be regularly monitored using performance indicators and an external and independent evaluation of the whole programme must be carried out on a regular basis (Article 15). Lastly, the two final Articles of the Regulation concern the transition from the Europe for Citizens Programme for the period 2007-2013 to the new programme for the period 2014-2020 (Article 16) and stipulate the entry into force of the Regulation.

3.2. Programme Guide and Annual Work Programme for 2015

The Programme Guide and the 2015 Annual Work Programme are two other relevant documents concerning the Europe for Citizens Programme. These documents can be found on the website of the European Commission, where the calls for proposals for Europe for Citizens are published, and they provide guidelines on action grants subject to the established calls for proposals.

The Programme Guide consists of three chapters and two annexes. Chapter I provides an overview of the programme by specifying its objectives, priorities, general features, structure and budget. Chapter II concerns the submission and selection procedures and outlines the implemented criteria for project evaluation and selection. Chapter III lays down financial provisions concerning Europe for

²⁵¹ Regulation (EU) No 390/2014, OJ L 115, 17.4.2014, p. 5.

Citizens grants and establishes the observance of a series of financial and contractual conditions, for example the no-profit principle or the principle of non-retroactivity. Finally, the Programme Guide contains two annexes: the first one is a table explaining the eligible criteria for each measure supported by the programme and the second one is a table to be used to calculate the lump sums for the preparatory activities necessary for the design of project proposals.

The Annual Work Programme has the aim of implementing the Europe for Citizens Programme. According to Article 8 of Regulation (EU) No 390/2014 the Commission implements the programme through the adoption of annual work programmes. Work programmes lay down the priorities, the expected results and the system of implementation for the concerned year. Furthermore they shall also provide a description of the initiatives to be implemented and indicate the amount allocated to each action, a general timetable and, in relation to grants, the pursued objectives, the criteria for project evaluation and selection and the eligible amount of co-financing.²⁵²

The Work Programme for the year 2015 was adopted by a Commission implementing decision in 2014 (C(2014) 9220 final), establishing the allocation of 21 million²⁵³ for the implementation of the programme in 2015. Attached to the Commission implementing decision there is an annex providing guidelines for the year 2015. First of all, the Annex lists the priorities of the programme for 2015. Under Strand 1, the key historical moment that should be taken into consideration is the 70th anniversary of the end of the World War II: thus, priority for 2015 is given to those projects that focus on World War II and on the spread of intolerance that enabled crimes against humanity. Under Strand 2, the debate on EU policies needs to be deepened, thus 2015 project proposals shall address one of the following questions:

- What does the EU mean to citizens? What are the benefits and impact of EU citizenship? How can the rights and benefits attached to EU citizenship be better promoted and implemented?
- How can democracy in the EU be further enhanced?
- How can citizens express their opinions and influence the policy-making process?
- How can xenophobia, racism, intolerance be addressed?
- How can the EU maintain its role in an increasingly globalised world?²⁵⁴

²⁵² Regulation (EU) No 390/2014, OJ L 115, 17.4.2014, p. 5.

²⁵³ Commission Implementing Decision of 8 December 2014 on the adoption of the 2015 work programme and the financing for the implementation of the 'Europe for Citizens' programme, C(2014)9220 final, p.3.

²⁵⁴ Annex to the Commission implementing decision of 8 December 2014 on the adoption of the 2015 work programme and the financing for the implementation of the 'Europe for Citizens' programme, C(2014)9220 final, p. 6.

In addition, the Annex provides a description of the programme strands, their expected results and the work programme scope, as well as relevant information on the budget breakdown, action grants, implemented criteria for all action grants and their potential beneficiaries.

3.3. eForm and annexes

The eForms concerning the different measures financed under the Europe for Citizens Programme slightly differ, but there can be found several commonalities. They are, in fact, divided into similar parts.²⁵⁵ First, they begin with an administrative part concerning the identification of the applicant organisation and its partners, as well as their activities and their previous engagement in EU funding programmes. Second, there is a part related to the description of project activities, often entitled 'work programme' or 'activity plan', followed by a more technical and analytical part, which is devoted to the general and specific objectives pursued by the project, as well as to dissemination, implementation and impact. Finally there is a financial part concerning the budget, and in the end a declaration on honour, which is considered an integral part of the application, must be attached to the eForm.

As far as the budget is concerned, it must be underlined that although the maximum amount that can be requested varies according to the programme measure for which the candidate is applying, the grant is always calculated in accordance with a lump sum financing system. The lump sum covers all the eligible costs of the actions, in particular staff costs, travel costs, rental of rooms, communication and dissemination costs. For Town Twinning the lump sum is calculated according to the number of participants, while for the other measures it is calculated according to three factors, that is the number of participants, the number of participating countries and the number of organised events. Annex II, attached to the Europe for Citizens Programme Guide, provides two tables: the first one establishes the lump sum for the financed actions and the second one, to be used only for European Remembrance and Civil Society projects, establishes the lump sum for the preparatory activities. Applicants must calculate the budget for their project proposal in accordance with these tables and report it in the dedicated part of the eForm.

²⁵⁵ The following pieces of information taken from: M. Varotto, *Le opportunità dell'Unione Europea per gli enti locali: strumenti di europrogettazione per l'accesso ai finanziamenti e la gestione dei progetti*, Milanofiori Assago, IPSOA, 2010, p. 439-40.

4. Example of a project proposal on ‘Democratic engagement and civic participation’

Paragraph 4 of this Chapter is devoted to the design of a project proposal under the measure entitled ‘Civil Society Projects’ of the Europe for Citizens Programme. The primary purpose of the ‘Civil Society Projects’ action is to bring Europe closer to its citizens and to encourage them to participate in the European construction: through the projects funded under this measure citizens are, in fact, given the opportunity to be involved in transnational cooperation exchanges and initiatives, aimed at developing a sense of belonging to common European ideals and strengthening the process of European integration.

For my project proposal I have chosen to focus on the ‘Civil Society Projects’ measure, as I believe that the current political and economic situation we are living requires Member States to overcome their disagreements and differences and to develop a stronger sense of belonging to common ideals, values and memories. At the present time the concept of EU citizenship does not seem to take deep root among EU countries; moreover, the latest financial and economic crisis and its negative effects on Member States, as well as the lack of a cohesive Union from a political point of view, have represented tough challenges for Europe, which nowadays seems to be in a crunch because of the widespread ‘Euro-scepticism’. In this context, the process of European integration needs to be strengthened, however integration can be achieved concretely only when citizens really identify themselves with the EU, its institutions and values and they participate actively in the civic and democratic life of the Union. To achieve these objectives projects financed under the Europe for Citizens Programme could make a valuable contribution towards a growing awareness of EU citizenship among citizens of the Member States.

Among the stakeholders who might be involved in a civil society project, I have decided to focus on a specific target group: young people between the age of 15 and 20 years old. The younger generations represent the future of the Union and for this reason they need, more than other groups of citizens, to be involved directly in the Union life and encouraged to participate in the EU policy-making process. The organisations that can participate in civil society projects as applicants or partners must be either public bodies, such as education, cultural and research institutions, or non-profit organisations including civil society organisations. For my project proposal I have selected some public entities, notably public secondary schools, but also non-profit organisations and civil society organisations (in particular NGOs) involved in the fields of youth, education and training. The selected organisations really exist and the information concerning their work, scope and mission, reported in Part B of the eForm, has been taken from their official websites. The chosen participating countries are eleven: Italy (whose participating secondary school is the applicant organisation of the project), Belgium, Croatia, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Malta, Montenegro, Serbia, Netherlands and

the United Kingdom. I have selected a substantial number of countries since a key feature required for projects under the Civil Society Projects action is their transnationality, in order to involve as many countries as possible and to give participants the opportunity to live a multicultural experience. Among the selected countries there are two that are not part of the Union yet, but are on the road to EU membership: Serbia and Montenegro. The duration of the project from preparation to evaluation lasts twelve months (the maximum project duration can be eighteen months) and the project activities proposed to participants last six days, from 16th to 22nd October 2016, and take place in Brussels (Belgium). The choice of organising all the activities only in one country is strictly linked to the available budget (the maximum eligible grant for civil society projects is of EUR 150.000), which allows little room for manoeuvre, while the choice of Brussels over other cities is linked to the fact that Brussels can be considered the political and institutional city of the European Union, therefore participants can reflect on the concept of EU citizenship being at the formal 'core' of Europe.

The activities conceived for the project proposal pursue the key objectives of the Europe for Citizens Programme through two specific means: the use of ICT and the realisation of innovative and stimulating activities. The reason behind this choice lays on the intention of encouraging youngsters' participation through the exploitation of more immediate and captivating tools: the use of ICT, such as laptops, mobile phones and video cameras, and the realisation of creative activities able to stimulate young participants' curiosity and reflection, rather than the organisation of more formal events. The key activities of the project are: the visit to the European Commission, the creation of digital storytelling videos and a workshop on EU communication channels. First, the visit to the European Commission has been conceived to raise awareness of the Union policy-making process, its institutions and functioning. The primary purpose is, indeed, to provide participants with relevant information about the European Union and to reduce the institutional divide existing between EU bodies and young citizens, so that they can discover how the EU machine actually works and they might be encouraged to participate in the Union life more actively. Second, the main output of the digital storytelling activity is the creation of three/four-minute videos realised on a specific topic with the help of pictures, videos, interviews, music and words. The topics that participants tackle during this activity relate to the significance of EU citizenship, investigated from different points of view: from women's point of view, as well as from youngsters' and immigrants' points of view. Participants must make an effort to focus on these three target groups, who at times prove to be disadvantaged, and try to understand how these people see themselves as Union citizens or Union residents. The effort requested during this type of activity is to consider EU citizenship in relation to women, youngsters and foreigners who are nationals of a non-EU country: what the pros and cons of EU citizenship are, how the EU is perceived by these groups of people and what being EU citizens means to them. The goal is to stimulate a critical reflection on the role played by certain target groups in the

Union as EU citizens or possible future EU citizens through the creation of a brief digital story composed of pictures, videos and music. Third, the workshop aims at gathering individual opinions on a specific topic, that is communication between EU institutions and citizens, in particular the youngest ones. The activity provides the opportunity to discuss about the communication channels exploited by the EU: how the institutions communicate with citizens and what needs to be improved in order to encourage youngsters' active involvement in the Union life. Finally, the project proposal suggests a set of dissemination tools (website, local events and interactive chat) to spread the project outcomes among a wider audience and to open the debate also to civil society. Indeed, the Commission pays considerable attention to the dissemination of the project results, as they shall be visible and accessible by Member States, civil society and all the organisations involved in the project field: this is why it is important to conceive an effective dissemination strategy to be employed during the whole project life, involving especially the realisation of websites, surveys, publications and the organisation of local events²⁵⁶.

In conclusion, the project gathers young participants from different horizons and backgrounds and it involves the collaboration of a transnational consortium of eleven organisations engaged in the fields of education and youth, as the basis for the development of long-lasting networking between public and private entities active in those sectors. The implementation of creative activities, which hopefully will be able to stimulate young participants, has the ultimate aim of promoting reflection and supporting debates related to EU citizenship and young people's democratic and civic participation at Union level.

Presented below is the eForm that I have filled in:

²⁵⁶ N. Tieri, *Manuale di Europrogettazione*, Pubblicato dall'autore, 2014, p. 39-40.

EUROPE FOR CITIZENS

<i>Programme:</i>	EUROPE FOR CITIZENS
<i>Sub-programme:</i>	Strand 2: Democratic engagement and civic participation
<i>Programme Guide/Call for proposals:</i>	Europe for Citizens – Programme Guide 2014-2020
<i>Action:</i>	2.3.: Civil Society Projects
<i>Sub-action:</i>	N/A
<i>Project Title:</i>	Young European @dventurers
<i>Project acronym:</i>	YE@
<i>Language used to complete the form:</i>	English

LIST OF PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

Part A. Identification of the applicant and if applicable other organisation(s) participating in the project. This Part must be completed separately for each organisation participating in the project.

Partner n.	Role	Organisation Name	Type of organisation	City	Country
P1	Applicant Organisation	IIS Marie Curie	School	Torino	Italy
P2	Partner	Lycée Jacqmain	School	Brussels	Belgium
P3	Partner	UMKI	Civil Society Organisation	Rijeka	Croatia
P4	Partner	Oulun Lyseon Lukio	School	Oulu	Finland
P5	Partner	SCI Hellas	Civil Society Organisation	Athens	Greece
P6	Partner	Madach Imre Gimnazium	School	Budapest	Hungary
P7	Partner	Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ	Public Organism	St Venera	Malta
P8	Partner	Association for Democratic Prosperity – Zid	Non-for-profit organisation	Podgorica	Montenegro
P9	Partner	Montessori Lyceum	School	Amsterdam	Netherlands
P10	Partner	Crnjanski Gimnazija	School	Belgrade	Serbia
P11	Partner	OpportUNITY International	Non-for-profit organisation	Newcastle	United Kingdom

P1 – IIS MARIE CURIE (ITALY)

Structure

Status: Public

Non-profit organisation: No

NGO: No

Type of organisation: Public Secondary School

Aims and activities of the organisation

1) Please provide a short presentation of your organisation (key activities, affiliations etc.) relating to the domain covered by the project. (Max. 1000 characters)

The 'Istituto Superiore Marie Curie' was founded in 2003, and it draws inspiration from the physicist Marie Curie, the first woman to win a Nobel Prize. Despite remaining linked to the tradition, the school represents a new educational reality offering a broad range of courses (scientific, linguistic and pedagogical ones), and the objectives it pursues are the promotion of innovation, the spread of scientific knowledge and the development of critical thinking among students by giving them the instruments to become more conscious and active citizens. The school has supported many initiatives, from contests to seminars, conferences and also projects at national and European level. The projects managed by the school in the past tackled a wide range of issues: some concerned critical topics of our epoch such as immigration, violence against women and environmental protection, while others were more focused on the Italian territory and the area in which the school is located.

2) Please describe the role of the organisation in the project. (Max. 1000 characters)

The school will be the supervisor of the well-management of the project. In particular, it will be in charge of the organisational and administrative management of the project activities and it will guarantee their quality. Moreover, it will supervise the achievement of the expected results and it will share the role of dissemination with the other partners. Finally, being the applicant organisation of the project, it will be the spoke-organisation with the European institutions and it will be responsible for the project realisation and its financial management.

Other EU grants

1) Please list the projects for which the organisation or department responsible for the management of this application has received financial support from the EU Programme during the last three years.

'Aboard the Citizen Ship' – Youth in Action (Sub-Action 5.1 Meetings of young people and those responsible for youth policy);

'Agora – Quality and Innovation in Youth Participation' – Youth in Action (Sub-Action 4.3 Training and networking of those active in youth work and youth organisations).

2) Please list other grant applications submitted by your organisation, or the department responsible, for this project proposal. For each grant application, please mention the EU Programme concerned and the amount requested.

None.

P2 - LYCÉE JACQMAIN (BELGIUM)

Structure

Status: Public

Non-profit organisation: No

NGO: No

Type of organisation: Public Secondary School

Aims and activities of the organisation

1) Please provide a short presentation of your organisation (key activities, affiliations etc.) relating to the domain covered by the project. (Max. 1000 characters)

The 'Lycée Jacqmain' was founded in 1922 by the mayor Emile Jacqmain. It exploits a traditional teaching method favouring the study of scientific subjects and over time it has also developed valuable collaborations with some international bodies, in particular Amnesty International. Thanks to the international vocation of the school, young people can learn in a creative way and develop an international spirit, thus the participation in the project can be an important experience to give some students the opportunity to compare themselves with a multicultural atmosphere and to foster their understanding of the Union and of the significance of European citizenship.

2) Please describe the role of the organisation in the project. (Max. 1000 characters)

The Jacqmain Lyceum will be in charge of the management of some practical aspects related to the project, in particular those concerning the hotel and the conference centre. In addition to this, the school will be in charge of the organisation of the visit to the European Commission.

Other EU grants

1) Please list the projects for which the organisation or department responsible for the management of this application has received financial support from the EU Programme during the last three years.

None.

2) Please list other grant applications submitted by your organisation, or the department responsible, for this project proposal. For each grant application, please mention the EU Programme concerned and the amount requested.

None.

P3 – UDRUGA MLADIH KORAK ISPRED (CROATIA)

Structure

Status: Private

Non-profit organisation: No

NGO: Yes

Type of organisation: Civil Society Organisation

Aims and activities of the organisation

1) Please provide a short presentation of your organisation (key activities, affiliations etc.) relating to the domain covered by the project. (Max. 1000 characters)

UMKI is a youth organisation dealing with a broad range of initiatives in the fields of education, training, employment and leisure. It seeks to organise activities for young people and to raise awareness of the opportunities they can enjoy as Croatian and European citizens. Seen that Croatia joined the EU two years ago, the organisation contributes, in fact, to the strengthening of the European dimension. Moreover, it encourages a culture of understanding, tolerance and dialogue: for this reason it works with students, young workers and all those people who are interested in fostering a feeling of personal responsibility for peace, human rights and tolerance.

2) Please describe the role of the organisation in the project. (Max. 1000 characters)

The workshop that will take place on the fourth day of activities is aimed at producing interesting outcomes that should be analysed in detail. UMKI will be in charge of collecting the main outputs (in the form of comments, opinions, suggestions) emerged from the workshop discussion, elaborating them and publishing them on the website in order to involve a wider audience.

Other EU grants

1) Please list the projects for which the organisation, or department responsible for the management of this application has received financial support from the EU Programme during the last three years.

'Homo Europeanus, Overcoming the Knowledge Deficit' - Europe for Citizens 2014-2020 (Strand-2 Projects of Civil Society).

'Boost Your Employability!' (BYE!) - Erasmus + (Key Action 1, Sub-Action Mobility projects in the field of education. Training and youth).

2) Please list other grant applications submitted by your organisation, or the department responsible, for this project proposal. For each grant application, please mention the EU Programme concerned and the amount requested.

None.

P4 - OULUN LYSEON LUKIO (FINLANDIA)

Structure

Status: Public

Non-profit organisation: No

NGO: No

Type of organisation: Public Secondary School

Aims and activities of the organisation

1) Please provide a short presentation of your organisation (key activities, affiliations etc.) relating to the domain covered by the project. (Max. 1000 characters)

'Oulun Lyseon Lukio' is located in the city of Oulu, in northern Finland. The school was founded in the nineteenth century as a private lyceum, but after a few decades it became a public school. Oulun Lyseon Lukio offers to its students an IB-study programme in English and it focuses mostly on the study of scientific subjects, in particular computer science. The school mission is to provide students with an educational and training system designed to help them grow and become caring and responsible global citizens. Indeed, the school is focused on the promotion of an environment where diversity is considered a strength and differences are seen as an asset. For these reasons, the school participation in the project can be a great opportunity for its students to live a multicultural experience and to become more aware of what means being part of the European Union.

2) Please describe the role of the organisation in the project. (Max. 1000 characters)

Since the students study computer science at school and some of the teachers have a good knowledge of this subject, their role will be fundamental in implementing the dissemination tools. In fact, the school will be in charge of the creation of the project website and of its interactive chat, on which the other partners will upload the materials concerning the project in order to disseminate the project results among civil society and to reach a wider audience. Along with the creation of the virtual platform, the school will be in charge of providing technical support to the other partner organisations during the entire life of the project, ensuring that the website and the interactive chat work in a smooth manner and are updated constantly.

Other EU grants

1) Please list the projects for which the organisation, or department responsible for the management of this application has received financial support from the EU Programme during the last three years.

None.

2) Please list other grant applications submitted by your organisation, or the department responsible, for this project proposal. For each grant application, please mention the EU Programme concerned and the amount requested.

None.

P5 - KINISI ETHELONTON SERVICE CIVIL INTERNATIONAL HELLAS (GREECE)

Structure

Status: Private

Non-profit organisation: No

NGO: Yes

Type of organisation: Civil Society Organisation

Aims and activities of the organisation

1) Please provide a short presentation of your organisation (key activities, affiliations etc.) relating to the domain covered by the project. (Max. 1000 characters)

The 'Kinisi Ethelonton Service Civil International Hellas' (SCI-Hellas) is a non-governmental organisation based in Athens whose aim is to promote peace, solidarity and intercultural cooperation among different populations through the organisation of transnational volunteering projects, campaigns, trainings and seminars. Its mission is to create and reinforce cooperation among people belonging to different cultural and social backgrounds. Moreover, through the organisation of volunteering initiatives the SCI-Hellas has tackled the issue of citizens' democratic and civic participation, as well as some social problems affecting the Greek population (it is, in fact, the founder member of the Greek Antipoverty Network). For these reasons, the organisation participation in the project can be a valuable opportunity to tackle the issue of European democratic and civic engagement more closely.

2) Please describe the role of the organisation in the project. (Max. 1000 characters)

During the development of the project it will be extremely important to test young participants' knowledge about the EU: indeed, the SCI-Hellas will be in charge of conceiving the questionnaires to submit to participants before and after the project activities. The submission of questionnaires is, in fact, important for both participants and organisers in order to understand what youngsters know about the EU and how they perceive it.

Other EU grants

1) Please list the projects for which the organisation, or department responsible for the management of this application has received financial support from the EU Programme during the last three years.

'YOU4EU' - Erasmus+ (Key Action 3, Sub-Action Meetings between young people and decision-makers in the field of youth).

2) Please list other grant applications submitted by your organisation, or the department responsible, for this project proposal. For each grant application, please mention the EU Programme concerned and the amount requested.

None.

P6 – MADACH IMRE GIMNAZIUM (HUNGARY)

Structure

Status: Public

Non-profit organisation: No

NGO: No

Type of organisation: Public Secondary School

Aims and activities of the organisation

1) Please provide a short presentation of your organisation (key activities, affiliations etc.) relating to the domain covered by the project. (Max. 1000 characters)

The Madach Imre Gimnazium is characterised by an atmosphere for learning and studying in a constructive and creative manner. The school seeks to teach students a balanced outlook on life, work and leisure, and it offers a broad range of educational activities aimed at developing students' creativity, initiative and communication skills: from arts to languages, music, drama and debating. In particular, the school provides students with the learning of three foreign languages. Performing arts also play an important role in the life of the school as they help students to become more open-minded and be sensitive to the world of arts.

2) Please describe the role of the organisation in the project. (Max. 1000 characters)

The school will be in charge of submitting the questionnaires to participants before and after the project activities. Then, it will collect the completed questionnaires and will compare their results: indeed, it will seek to understand whether the perception of the EU has changed and whether the young participants have learnt new things about the Union during the project activities. Then, it will publish the elaborated results on the project website so as to allow civil society to read and analyse them.

Other EU grants

1) Please list the projects for which the organisation, or department responsible for the management of this application has received financial support from the EU Programme during the last three years.

None.

2) Please list other grant applications submitted by your organisation, or the department responsible, for this project proposal. For each grant application, please mention the EU Programme concerned and the amount requested.

None.

P7 - AĠENZIJA ŻĠHAŻAĠĦ (MALTA)

Structure

Status: Public

Non-profit organisation: No

NGO: No

Type of organisation: Public Organism

Aims and activities of the organisation

1) Please provide a short presentation of your organisation (key activities, affiliations etc.) relating to the domain covered by the project. (Max. 1000 characters)

The 'Aġenzija Żġhażagħ' is the National Youth Agency of Malta, founded in 2011 to promote the interests of young people: it gives them support and assistance in order to improve their potential and skills and it seeks to address their needs and aspirations. The organisation works at local and European level. In particular, at Union level it is engaged in an on-going cooperation with the Youth Working Party, Youth Minister's Council and other EU bodies (for example EuroMed) on youth related issues. Furthermore, the Aġenzija Żġhażagħ has already received EU funds for the development and implementation of several projects, which all concerned young people. Those projects aimed at enhancing young participants' skills and competences and empowering them as responsible individuals and active citizens at national and European level.

2) Please describe the role of the organisation in the project. (Max. 1000 characters)

Given its relevant experience and its cooperation with some EU bodies in the fields of youth and education, the main task of the Aġenzija Żġhażagħ will be to find and contact a guest lecturer for the final workshop: since the topic of the workshop is the communication between the EU and its citizens, hopefully the Agency will try to contact and invite a delegate from the DG COMM. In addition, it will be in charge of organising two events: the interviews after the digital storytelling activity and the final multicultural party. In the first case, it will coordinate the interviews conducted at the end of the third day in order to collect participants' opinions and comments about the digital storytelling activity. In the second, it will coordinate the final party: for this event participating groups are asked to bring with them some food typical of their countries, and the task of the Agency, on this occasion, will be the coordination of the party, ensuring it is carried out smoothly.

Other EU grants

1) Please list the projects for which the organisation, or department responsible for the management of this application has received financial support from the EU Programme during the last three years.

'Developing Detached Youth Work Practice' – Erasmus+ (Key Action 1, Sub-Action Mobility projects in the field of education, training and youth).

'Youth on the Move, Info Mobility' (YoMIM) – Youth in Action (Sub-Action 5.1 Meetings of young people and those responsible for youth policy).

2) Please list other grant applications submitted by your organisation, or the department responsible, for this project proposal. For each grant application, please mention the EU Programme concerned and the amount requested.

'My Way' – Leonardo da Vinci (Transfer of Innovation project) - EUR 180.000

P8 - ASSOCIATION FOR DEMOCRATIC PROSPERITY – ZID (MONTENEGRO)

Structure

Status: Private

Non-profit organisation: Yes

NGO: No

Type of organisation: Non-for-profit Organisation

Aims and activities of the organisation

1) Please provide a short presentation of your organisation (key activities, affiliations etc.) relating to the domain covered by the project. (Max. 1000 characters)

The 'Association for Democratic Prosperity – Zid' is a non-profit organisation founded in 1996 and located in Podgorica. At the beginning its main scope was to help students enrolled at the University of Montenegro, but later on its mission has widened and included a broad range of issues, such as the promotion of citizens' active participation at local level through volunteering initiatives and education activities, the enhancement of the quality of life of local communities and the eradication of social problems affecting civil society with the use of media and cultural tools.

2) Please describe the role of the organisation in the project. (Max. 1000 characters)

The Association will be in charge of the collection of multimedia materials, notably the digital stories created by participants, the short interviews conducted after the digital storytelling activity and all the photos taken throughout the entire week. Those materials will be uploaded on the website and the digital storytelling videos will be also published on the official European YouTube channel.

Other EU grants

1) Please list the projects for which the organisation, or department responsible for the management of this application has received financial support from the EU Programme during the last three years.

None.

2) Please list other grant applications submitted by your organisation, or the department responsible, for this project proposal. For each grant application, please mention the EU Programme concerned and the amount requested.

None.

P9 - MONTESSORI LYCEUM (NETHERLANDS)

Structure

Status: Public

Non-profit organisation: No

NGO: No

Type of organisation: Public Secondary School

Aims and activities of the organisation

1) Please provide a short presentation of your organisation (key activities, affiliations etc.) relating to the domain covered by the project. (Max. 1000 characters)

The 'Montessori Lyceum' is a large educational institution with more than 1500 students and 130 teachers. Founded in the 1930s, it follows the 'Montessori method' of teaching, created by the Italian pedagogue Maria Montessori: according to this method the academic year is divided into six 'blok' consisting of six weeks each and during every blok of weeks the students have to do a precise amount of homework and to achieve a series of established results. The Montessori school is a place where young people can learn in a creative way and develop an international spirit, thus the participation in the project can be an important experience to give some students the opportunity to compare themselves with a multicultural atmosphere and to increase their understanding of European citizenship.

2) Please describe the role of the organisation in the project. (Max. 1000 characters)

The Montessori Lyceum will be in charge of managing the last activity of the project, that is the workshop: it will decide how to divide participants into different working groups and how to organise the workshop structure. Moreover, a teacher accompanying the participants of the lyceum to Brussels will be chosen to act as a moderator during the activity: he/she will assist participants, mediate between them and give useful pieces of advice or information on how to conduct the activity.

Other EU grants

1) Please list the projects for which the organisation or department responsible for the management of this application has received financial support from the EU Programme during the last three years.

None.

2) Please list other grant applications submitted by your organisation, or the department responsible, for this project proposal. For each grant application, please mention the EU Programme concerned and the amount requested.

None.

P10 - CRNJANSKI GIMNAZIJA (SERBIA)

Structure

Status: Public

Non-profit organisation: No

NGO: No

Type of organisation: Public Secondary School

Aims and activities of the organisation

1) Please provide a short presentation of your organisation (key activities, affiliations etc.) relating to the domain covered by the project. (Max. 1000 characters)

‘Crnjanski Gimnazija’ is an educational institution implementing a four-year education curriculum and preparing students for entering a range of university faculties, both in Serbia and abroad. Students can choose between the Serbian Curriculum and the English Curriculum. The former follows the standard Serbian national programme, whereas the latter is characterised by the teaching of the subjects in English. The strong points of the school are the teachers and their teaching methodology which makes use of a range of information technologies in classrooms, such as interactive whiteboards and tablets. Since the school is a place where young people can learn in a creative way and develop an international spirit, the participation in the project can be a unique opportunity to live a multicultural experience and to reflect on the significance of EU citizenship, seen that Serbia is on the road to EU membership.

2) Please describe the role of the organisation in the project. (Max. 1000 characters)

The Crnjanski Gimnazija will be in charge of managing the first activity of the project, that is the welcome meeting. Before the beginning of the project, the school will provide participating groups with guidelines on how to create their presentations for the welcome meeting. Moreover, if the groups decide to edit a PowerPoint presentation or a video for introducing themselves at the welcome meeting, they must send it to the contact person of the Crnjanski Gimnazija, who will be in charge of collecting those materials. Finally, one of the teachers accompanying the students of the school to Brussels will be the presenter at the welcome meeting and will manage the presentations of the eleven groups.

Other EU grants

1) Please list the projects for which the organisation, or department responsible for the management of this application has received financial support from the EU Programme during the last three years.

None.

2) Please list other grant applications submitted by your organisation, or the department responsible, for this project proposal. For each grant application, please mention the EU Programme concerned and the amount requested.

None.

P11 - OPPORTUNITY INTERNATIONAL (UNITED KINGDOM)

Structure

Status: Private

Non-profit organisation: Yes

NGO: No

Type of organisation: Non-for-profit Organisation

Aims and activities of the organisation

1) Please provide a short presentation of your organisation (key activities, affiliations etc.) relating to the domain covered by the project. (Max. 1000 characters)

OpportUNITY is a non-for-profit organisation based in the UK, whose scope is to inspire, support and empower young people. Indeed, its mission is to promote equal access to education, healthier lifestyles and greater social cohesion. The association promotes lifelong learning through the organisation of informal activities in the fields of sport, media and performing arts. In the previous years it managed several creative projects at national level, with a specific focus on the role that media, art and photography play in promoting issues such as employment, social inclusion, gender equality. These initiatives have allowed civil society, and in particular young people, to build upon multicultural experiences and to exploit art and creativity to tackle some of the major problems of the present time.

2) Please describe the role of the organisation in the project. (Max. 1000 characters)

Given its experience in developing projects focused on art and media, the organisation will be in charge of taking care of the more creative part of the Ne@ project: it will be the consultant for all the 'artistic tasks' performed by the other partners, especially by giving advice on the design of the website and the organisation of the digital storytelling activity. Moreover, the association will be in charge of gathering and coordinating all the technological devices needed for the project activities.

Other EU grants

1) Please list the projects for which the organisation, or department responsible for the management of this application has received financial support from the EU Programme during the last three years.

'NEWomen' - Erasmus + (Key Action 2, Sub-Action Strategic Partnerships in the field of youth).

2) Please list other grant applications submitted by your organisation, or the department responsible, for this project proposal. For each grant application, please mention the EU Programme concerned and the amount requested.

‘Training for Trainers’ - Erasmus + (Key Action 2, Sub-Action Strategic Partnerships in the field of education, training, and youth) – EUR 135.000.

PART C. Description of the project

C.1 Timetable of the project

Please indicate the total duration of the project from preparation to evaluation.

Start date: 01/2016

End date: 01/2017

C.2. Venue(s) of the activities

The activities should take place in any of the eligible countries to the Programme.

All the project activities will take place in Brussels (Belgium). Participants will be hosted at the Meininger Hotel (Quai du Hainaut 33, 1080, Brussels), which will be the meeting point for participants on the day of their arrival and where it will take place the final multicultural party. Participants will be provided with the Brussels Card in order to use public transports (buses and subway), to move around the city and also to reach the Diamant Conference Centre (80 Bd. A. Reyers LN/1030, Brussels) where the welcome meeting, the digital story telling activity and the workshop will take place. During the week participants will also visit the European Commission and they will have an informal tour around the city in order to collect the materials necessary for the digital storytelling activity.

C.3 Participants

Please complete for all the organisations involved both applicant and partners.

Partner number	Name of the organisation municipality	Country	Participant by target group (number)						Total number of participants
			Distribution by age group			Disadvantaged participants*	Women	Men	
			<30	30-60	>60				
1	IIS Marie Curie	Italy	22	4		1	14	12	26
2	Lycée Jacqmain	Belgium	24	2		1	13	13	26
3	UMKI	Croatia	10	2		1	5	7	12
4	Oulun Lyseon Lukio	Finland	22	4		1	13	13	26
5	SCI-Hellas	Greece	10	2		1	5	7	12
6	Madach Imre Gimnazium	Hungary	24	2			15	11	26
7	Aġenzija Żgħażaġh	Malta	10	2		1	7	5	12
8	ADP – Zid	Montenegro	10	2		1	6	6	12
9	Montessori Lyceum	Netherlands	24	2		1	14	12	26
10	Crnjanski Gimnazija	Serbia	23	3		1	13	13	26
11	OpportUNITY International	United Kingdom	22	4		1	15	11	26
Total			201	29		10	119	111	230

C.4 Short description of the project, including its aims in English, in French or in German. (Max. 2500 characters)

The project aims at fostering EU citizenship by making use of ICT and by involving participants in innovative activities. The project focuses on a specific target group: youngsters between the age of 15 and 20 years old coming from European high schools or civil society organisations involved in the fields of education and youth. The project will last six days and take place in Brussels where eleven groups are due to arrive on 16th October 2016. Before the beginning of the project, participants will be asked to fill in a questionnaire that investigates their knowledge and opinion about the EU. On 17th October participating groups will present themselves and their countries at the welcome meeting; then in the afternoon the results of the questionnaires will be discussed. On the following

day, participants will visit the European Commission and, after the visit, they will start wandering in groups around the city to collect materials for the creation of the digital storytelling videos. On 19th October the groups will transform the collected materials into digital stories. It is important to underline that each participating group will be asked to bring to Brussels three or more laptops to be used for the making of the digital stories, and each participant will be asked to bring a mobile phone or a tablet or photo camera to be used to take pictures and make videos or interviews for the digital storytelling activity. On 20th October there will be a workshop, whose aim is to make participants reflect on how the EU communicates with its citizens, especially with youngsters, the channels it uses and how to overcome the scarce interest and reception among those people. The reason behind the choice of these project activities lays on the intention of strengthening young people's civic and democratic participation in a captivating manner: first by making use of ICT, second by giving more usability to information and relative advantages offered by the EU to its citizens and finally by stimulating young participants' curiosity and reflection on the significance of EU citizenship. The ultimate goal of the project is, in fact, to increase a greater awareness of the political and institutional process existing behind the immense machine of the European Union.

C.5 Budget

A. Project activities

Total number of participants per event (<i>Maximum number of events: 3</i>)	Number of involved countries	Amount
226/250	10-12	40.000 €
226/250	10-12	40.000 €
226/250	10-12	40.000 €
Subtotal		120.000 €

B. Preparatory activities

Number of participants	Amount
≤ 5	€ 2.250
Subtotal	€ 122.250
Total costs (A+B)	€ 122.250

PART D. Technical capacity

D.1 Experience of the project organisers in the field concerned. (Max. 2000 characters)

The leading proponent of the project, the 'Istituto di Istruzione Superiore Marie Curie', has already benefited from EU funding, and its personnel has already applied for European calls choosing, each time, those that were more suitable to the school needs. Indeed, over the years the teachers of the high school have acquired the organisational and technical capacities to write and manage projects at national and even European level. The last project, won by the school in the academic year 2012-2013, was designed for a national programme concerning European citizenship. After that experience

the school has decided to make a step further and to tackle again the topic of EU citizenship by drawing up a project proposal, on this occasion, under a EU funding programme, notably the Europe for Citizens Programme. Along with the leading proponent of the project, there are other ten partner organisations: some of them have a consolidated experience in organising youth initiatives and in managing projects, while others are less used to engaging in those types of activities, however they are able to offer an added value to the project, which is fundamental for its success. In conclusion, the participation in the Europe for Citizens Programme represents a great opportunity for all the participating organisations to tackle the issue of EU citizenship from youngsters' perspective: in fact they will coordinate a transnational project whose aim is to foster EU citizenship among young people and, indirectly, to create a more politically aware generation of EU citizens.

PART E. Project implementation and Award criteria

E.1 consistency with the objectives of the action and of the programme

Please tick relevant box(es)

General objectives of the Programme targeted by your project:

- To contribute to citizens' understanding of the Union, its history and diversity.
- To promote European citizenship and to improve conditions for civic and democratic participation at Union level.

Specific aims of the programme targeted by your project:

- Raise awareness of remembrance, history and values and the Union's aim that is to foster peace, its values and the well-being of its peoples by stimulating debate, reflection and development of networks.
- Encourage democratic and civic participation of citizens at Union level, by developing citizens' understanding of the Union policy making-process and increasing opportunities for societal and intercultural engagement and volunteering at EU level.

Annual priorities of the Programme targeted by your project (please don't select it if your project is not concerned by one of those priorities):

- Debate to the Future of Europe

State how your project fits in with the objectives (general and specific), themes and features you have selected. (Max. 3500 characters)

The latest financial crisis and its repercussions on Member States, as well as the lack of a strong Union from a political point of view, pose serious challenges to European identity: today Europe seems to be in a crunch and the concept of EU citizenship does not seem to take root among Member States. In this context, the Europe for Citizens Programme is essential for the strengthening of European citizenship and citizens' participation in the EU policy-making process. The 'Young European @dventurers' project takes inspiration from the provisions concerning European citizenship which are set out in the Treaty on European Union, in particular Articles 10 and 11. Article 10(3) claims that citizens have the right to participate in the democratic life of the Union and that decisions shall be taken by the EU institutions in an open manner. Article 11(1) affirms that the EU institutions shall give citizens and representative associations the opportunity to express and exchange their views in all areas of Union action, and they shall support an open and transparent

dialogue with civil society. The project complies with the objectives set out in the Treaties, as well as those established by the Europe for Citizens Programme, as it fosters EU citizenship among young people who represent the future of the Union. Moreover, there are additional purposes that the project wants to achieve in order to make a step further in the creation of a stronger Europe: to increase the participation of youngsters in the EU civic and democratic life and to bring them closer to the Union by stimulating their reflection through a number of interactive initiatives.

More in detail, the three major activities included in the project correspond to three specific objectives:

- the visit to the European Commission aims at raising awareness of the Union functioning among young participants, who shall feel closer to the EU institutions and be encouraged in participating in its democratic and civic life more actively;
- the digital storytelling activity aims at stimulating the reflection on a range of specific topics linked to EU citizenship, so as to give participants the possibility of reflecting on their feelings and ideas about their life as European citizens;
- the final workshop gives participants the possibility of discussing about how the EU communicates with its citizens and the possibility of suggesting new useful tools to reduce the 'institutional divide' that exists between EU institutions and citizens.

In conclusion, the expected results of the project are the reflection on the concept of European citizenship and on the advantages that young people may enjoy as European citizens, a stronger awareness of the functioning of EU institutions and a set of suggestions and tools for a better perception of the European Union and for an increased democratic participation of youngsters at Union level.

E.2 Activity plan/work programme of the project (Max 3500 characters)

The project attempts to reach the programme needs and objectives through a series of targeted activities. Those activities aim at the development of a critical reflection on EU citizenship among the youngsters participating in the project, as well as at the promotion of a stronger and more cohesive Europe. The work programme of the project consists of the following activities:

1. the welcome meeting, during which participants introduce themselves, present their background and explain how EU citizenship and the Union in general are perceived in their countries. In addition, after the welcome meeting, the results of the questionnaires submitted before the project beginning will be analysed and discussed;
2. the visit to the Commission, which represents an effort to reduce the 'institutional divide' that exists between institutions and citizens: it gives, in fact, participants an opportunity to discover how EU institutions actually work and how citizens can engage in the civic and democratic life of the Union;
3. the digital storytelling activity, divided in two phases: a first phase in which participants collect materials (photos, videos, interviews) wandering around the city and following a specific topic (notably women in the EU, youngsters in the EU, immigrants in the EU) and a second phase in which they realise a digital story by putting together the collected materials. This activity shall stimulate a critical reflection on the role played by certain target groups in the Union and shall contribute to understanding what those groups may think about EU citizenship and how they perceive the Union and its institutions;

4. the workshop, which gives the possibility of discussing about the communication channels exploited by the EU and how EU institutions communicate with citizens. The activity shall involve participants in a reflection concerning the effectiveness of the communication tools used by the Union and shall encourage them to make suggestions on how the EU can strengthen citizens' participation by using new innovative tools of communication and by improving the existing ones.

Those activities will take place in Brussels as it can be considered the political and institutional city of the European Union: indeed, participants will reflect on the concept of EU citizenship, being at the formal core of Europe. The planned work programme seeks to answer to the needs of the Europe for Citizens Programme and to make suggestions for an institutional improvement. The choice of developing such a project aims at achieving a stronger cohesion among the participating countries, and indirectly at encouraging the construction of a more inclusive Europe and a more responsible future generation of EU citizens, which are, indeed, the key objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy and the 'Europe for Citizens' Programme.

E.3 Dissemination (Max 3500 characters)

The outcomes of the 'Young European @dventurers' project are thought to reach not only the direct participants, but also a wider number of youngsters between the age of 15-20 years old, as well as civil society. In order to achieve this, a set of instruments that will help to disseminate the project impact have been identified.

First, the planned activities and their results will be visible through the creation of a dedicated website (www.europeanadventurers.com), which will be designed before the beginning of the project thanks to the help and the expertise of the students and the teachers of the 'Oulun Lyseon Lukio'. The website will be filled with a description of the activities proposed to participants and it will be updated with regular information throughout the project life. A particular section of the website will be devoted to pictures and videos. The digital storytelling videos created by the participants, along with the brief interviews conducted after the digital storytelling activity, will be also available on this part of the website. In addition to this, there will be created a specific section for an interactive chat that will give the possibility of chatting in real time. The chat is an innovative means able to arouse the curiosity of the website visitors, especially the youngest ones. The objective is, in fact, to open the debate to society and stimulate discussion through the use of new technological tools. Visitors of the website may use the chat to share their opinions about the project, debate on the topics tackled by the project activities as well as on further topics concerning the European Union that they may find interesting to discuss.

Second, the digital storytelling videos will be uploaded on the official EU Youtube Channel, so as to give everyone the possibility of watching them. The digital stories, conceived by the young participants, are immediate instruments which aim at investigating the significance of European citizenship through different interesting perspectives. Hopefully, they will attract the attention of civil society, raise awareness and encourage people to dwell on what European citizenship actually means.

Third, after having taken part into the project every school and association will be in charge of organising an event in its respective country of origin in an effort to involve the other boys and girls of their schools or associations who did not have the possibility of participating in the project directly. The event could take the form of a conference, a meeting, a school assembly or a workshop. Moreover, local or regional media will be contacted and the event will be open to civil society so as

to reach an even wider audience. The aim of the event shall be the spread of the project outcomes and, consequently, the encouragement of the debate on EU citizenship among other youngsters and civil society, with the ultimate intent of enhancing democratic and civic participation across Europe.

E.4 Impact and citizens involvement (Max. 3500 characters)

The target group reached by the proposed project includes youngsters between the age of 15 and 20 years old, who come from secondary schools or youth organisations located in the eleven participating countries. From a quantitative point of view, 230 people will take part in the activities directly, however the project is thought to reach a wider audience. In order to achieve this, a set of initiatives to spread the project results and to involve a larger public have been conceived: the creation of a dedicated website, the upload of the digital storytelling videos on the official EU YouTube Channel and the organisation of a public event in each participating country. From a qualitative point of view, the project is expected to bring participants closer to the European Union by proposing to them a series of gripping activities aimed at stimulating their reflection on EU citizenship and at encouraging their participation in the Union policy-making process. Participants will be asked to take part in first person in the project and to make a personal contribution for the good realisation of the planned activities. During the visit to the European Commission they will have the chance to deepen their knowledge about the Union and see with their own eyes how it works. The making of digital storytelling videos will encourage them to get involved in first person in a reflection about a number of topics related to EU citizenship. Finally, the expected outcome of the workshop is to develop a critical reflection on the channels of communication used by the EU and on what can be done to improve them in order to increase youngsters' engagement and interest at Union level.

The expected medium-term effects of the project are:

- to stimulate young participants' interest and reflection in a captivating manner, using ICT and organising creative activities;
- to offer them an important opportunity for intercultural engagement and transnational confrontation as the project brings together youngsters from different national backgrounds;
- to contribute to participants' better understanding of the Union and its policy-making process.

The expected long-term effects of the project are:

- to induce participants to feel more European, as a result of their participation in the 'Europe for Citizens' Programme;
- to disseminate the project outcomes and to reach an indirect European audience through the website and the organisation of local events;
- to foster European citizenship and to improve conditions for civic and democratic participation at Union level.

Furthermore, the project impact will be tested in a concrete manner by giving a questionnaire to participants, which must be filled in before and after the project activities. The aim is to test participants' knowledge about the EU and to understand how they perceive the EU and what European citizenship means for them. By doing this, the organisers can get an idea about the percentage of participants more involved in the Union democratic life and also of those who are actually lacking interest. The same questionnaire will be completed again at the end of the activities,

so as to test whether the perception of the EU has changed and knowledge about the Union functioning and policy making-process has increased thanks to the project activities.

PART F. Timetable of activities

Event Number: 1			
Date	Type of activity	Venue of the activity	Number of people reached
17/10/2016	Welcome meeting	Diamant Conference Centre	230
Content in brief			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 9.00-9.30: A delegate from the applicant organisation (Istituto Marie Curie) will make a short introductory presentation about the project, its planned activities and expected results ● 9.30-11.00: Presentation of the groups coming from Belgium, Netherlands, Finland, Malta and Greece ● 11.00-11.30: Coffee break ● 11.30-13.30: Presentation of the groups coming from Montenegro, United Kingdom, Serbia, Croatia, Hungary and Italy ● 13.30-15.00: Lunch pause ● 15.00-16.00: Analysis and discussion of the questionnaire results ● 16:00-17:00: Explanation of the activities planned for the two following days (visit to the Commission and digital storytelling) ● 17.30: Happy hour to give participants the opportunity for interaction ● Dinner on their own 			
Expected results			
<p>The expected results are the meeting of the participants and the creation of a cohesive network in order to work well during the week. On this day participants, in fact, will get to know the other groups and they will share their backgrounds, as well as their expectations and objectives for the project activities.</p>			

Event Number: 2			
Date	Type of activity	Venue of the activity	Number of people reached
From 18/10/2016 to 19/10/2016	Visit to the European Commission and digital storytelling activity	- European Commission - City of Brussels - Diamant Conference Centre	230
Content in brief			
<p>A guided tour at the European Commission and the collection of the needed material for the digital videos will take place on 18th October, while the making of the digital storytelling videos will take</p>			

place on 19th October.

On 18th October:

- 8:45: Division of participants into six groups
- 09.00-17.00: the groups, in turns, visit the Commission (tour sessions often last 90 minutes, but, on this occasion, they will be shorter, of 70 minutes each). Before or after the visit (depending on the beginning of their guided tour) the groups wander around the city to collect materials for the digital storytelling activity, following the assigned topic (women in the EU, youngsters in the EU and foreigners in the EU). Groups will be given a packed lunch and they will be accompanied by at least one adult.
- Dinner on their own

On 19th October:

- 9.30-13.30: Participants, still divided into six groups, design their final digital storytelling videos, being assisted and helped by the teachers of the Oulun Lyseon Lukio (for technical support) and by the chaperons of OpportUNITY Association (for the creative part).
- 13.30-15.00: Lunch pause
- 15.00-17.00: Showing of the digital storytelling videos and discussion
- 17:15-18:00: Happy hour during which ten chaperons, using a video camera or a mobile phone, interview random participants about the activity and the tackled topics
- Dinner on their own

Expected results

Information given to participants during the tour sessions at the Commission is expected to:

- increase their knowledge about the EU institutions, notably the Commission, and their functioning;
- make them more conscious about the European Union, its policy-making process and legislation;
- encourage them to search for further information on their own;
- help them feel closer to EU institutions.

Information given to participants will be tested on the last day by questionnaire, so as to understand whether the visit has been fruitful or not.

The expected results of the digital storytelling activity are to:

- captivate young participants' attention on EU citizenship by implementing a creative activity and using technological devices;
- encourage them to develop, in a creative manner, a critical reflection on EU citizenship and its significance for certain target groups.

Event Number: 3

Date	Type of activity	Venue of the activity	Number of people reached
20/10/2016	Final workshop	- Diamant Conference Centre - Meininger Hotel	230

Content in brief

- 10.00-10.30: Introduction to the major topics of the day (EU communication with its citizens, in particular youngsters, and EU communication channels)
- 10.30-12.00: Speech of the guest lecturer and contingent discussion
- 12.00-14.00: Lunch pause
- 14.00-15.30: Workshop, divided in groups, on EU communication channels (what their pros and cons are, how they can be improved and how they can reach young people more effectively)
- 15.30-16.30: Final discussion
- 17.00-17.30: Submission of the questionnaires
- 19.30-22.00: Multicultural dinner at the Meininger Hotel

Expected results

The expected results are:

- reflection on how the EU communicates with its citizens, and in particular with the younger generation, and on what needs to be improved in order to increase citizens' democratic and civic participation;
- increased awareness among participants of the communication tools employed by the EU (e.g. the EU Official Journal, the websites of EU institutions, the EU Youtube channel, the Europe Direct Network);
- increased involvement of young participants in the Union life through the use of the above-mentioned communication tools.

CONCLUSIONS

The dissertation aims at investigating Union legislation for the management and allocation of EU funding and the issue of EU project development. Today there is still a limited awareness of the opportunities and advantages offered by the EU funding programmes and the five Structural and Investment Funds, and consequently a limited awareness of the major rules governing the management of EU funds and the carrying out of Union policies. For these reasons, the dissertation has focused on EU law for funding, as well as on the analysis of documents and procedures related to project submission and on the techniques to be exploited to draw up and implement projects. In the three chapters a range of means necessary to achieve effective project design and management at European level have been examined. Above all, a strategic competence is to have a good knowledge of EU law for funding, that is those provisions regarding the allocation and management of funds and the carrying out of major policies by the European Union. Applying for funding means, in fact, keeping up to date with EU current objectives and policies and reflecting these approaches in the drafting of project proposals. Furthermore, it is important to know what documents are useful for the comprehension and development of European projects and where they can be found on the website of the Commission and its DGs: applicants shall read carefully all the legal documents related to the identified funding programme, especially its Regulation and Guide Programme. Lastly, it is essential to know how to use the techniques and methods conceived by the EU for project design and management. In order that a project is successful, it is not necessary to comply with all the rules established within the framework of PCM and LFA, but it is important to comply with their logical approach conceived specifically to attain relevance, feasibility and effectiveness of project proposals.

Through the investigation of the above-mentioned issues the dissertation seeks to make its own contribution towards an increased awareness of the role played by EU transnational projects in support of Europe's enhancement. European projects are not only a mere source of funding, but also a means for EU citizens to learn from others, grow and change for the better, as they support cooperation in a multicultural environment and the establishment, within the Union territory, of networks and partnerships exchanging experiences, knowledge and best practices. Today's Union structure is not a definitive one as in the future Member States might choose to ascribe wider competences to the EU institutional bodies or to reduce them, but until then the reality is that of an entity in transition²⁵⁷: the EU is still a laboratory, an incomplete reality, a project hanging in the

²⁵⁷ L. Daniele, *Diritto dell'Unione Europea. Sistema Istituzionale, ordinamento, tutela giurisdizionale, competenze*, V edizione, Milano, Giuffrè Editore, 2014, p. 53.

balance between success and failure. If a sense of European belonging developed in the future, it would certainly stem from a growing awareness of the existence of common transnational interests²⁵⁸, which is a *sine qua non* condition for the emergence of a European public opinion and for the construction and strengthening of a community sharing the same values, ideals, symbols. The actor that can foster such a process is the European Union itself and its institutions, in particular the Commission and its DGs for Youth, Culture, Education and Media through the implementation of actions and programmes in these crucial sectors.²⁵⁹ Consequently, the financing and implementation of European transnational projects could play a pivotal role in the strengthening of EU policies and interests. It is obvious that EU projects cannot eradicate the major needs and concerns of the Union and its Member States completely, nevertheless they can suggest a set of possible solutions by pursuing a bottom-up strategy aimed at supporting European excellences in a broad range of fields, especially those of training, education, research and innovation. EU projects have, thus, the potential to encourage professionals, specialists and private or public entities of the Member States to cooperate with the EU institutions in the implementation of transnational initiatives adding value to EU policies and objectives.

In this sense, despite the limited financial endowment of Europe for Citizens (in comparison with the one of other programmes such as Horizon 2020 or Erasmus+) projects funded under this programme are capable to make their own contribution towards Union strengthening. On one hand they help EU citizens feel closer to the institutions and be more conscious of the Union functioning. On the other hand they reflect on totalitarian regimes with the aim of supporting European remembrance, which is not less important as people can fight for a better future only through a proper understanding of their past, obtained by admitting responsibility, asking for forgiveness and fostering moral renewal²⁶⁰.

In conclusion, the European Union represents an ideal framework in which exchanges and relationships among individuals and institutions can be harmonised, but in reality there still exists a gap between the EU institutions and the organisations and individuals operating at local or national level. Nevertheless, the financing and implementation of European projects can contribute to reducing this institutional divide and fostering European integration as multicultural collaboration, the transfer of knowledge and the establishment of transnational networks would significantly help to create stronger ties within the Union territory in the long run. On 9th May 1950 French foreign

²⁵⁸ P. Scarduelli, *L'Europa disunita. Etnografia di un Continente*, Bologna, Archetipolibri, 2013, p. 152-3.

²⁵⁹ P. Scarduelli, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

²⁶⁰ European Parliament Resolution of 2 April 2009 on European conscience and totalitarianism, P6_TA(2009)0213, p. 3-4.

minister Robert Schuman launched the challenge of European integration, conscious of the significant efforts necessary for its concrete realisation:

*'Europe will not be made all at once, or according to a single plan. It will be built through concrete achievements which first create a de facto solidarity'*²⁶¹.

These words are still true today: in front of a 'European Union which is actually lacking of union'²⁶² there is a need for greater responsibility of both European and national authorities and a more active role of EU citizens in the Union affairs and policy-making process through the instruments of democratic participation strengthened by the Treaty of Lisbon. If this were finally achieved, it would mark a new stage in the process of creating a closer Union in which actions and decisions are taken as openly as possible and as closely as possible to citizens²⁶³ in order to promote effective cooperation and solidarity among the peoples of Europe.

²⁶¹ European Union, *The Schuman Declaration*:

<http://europa.eu/about-eu/basic-information/symbols/europe-day/schuman-declaration/index_en.htm>
[Accessed: 07/09/2015].

²⁶² On 9th September 2015 the European Commission put forward a package of proposals addressing the refugee crisis. On this occasion, European Commission President Juncker opened his speech by admitting that 'there is a lack of Europe in this Union, and a lack of union in this Union'.

See: European Commission, *Press Release*, <http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-5596_en.htm>
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²⁶³ Article 1, Treaty on European Union.

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