

**The REcup Project, under the European program CERV-2022-CITIZENS-TOWN, hosted its Raising Awareness Activity titled “Citizens Manifesto Brings Unemployment to the Heart of Europe” from November 11 to 13, 2024, in Thessaloniki, Greece.**

The REcup Project continued its mission of fostering active citizenship and employment advocacy with its latest Raising Awareness Activity in Thessaloniki, Greece. The event gathered local authorities, civil society organizations, trade unions, and unemployed citizens to engage in dialogues, workshops, and collaborative action plans aimed at addressing unemployment through civic participation and EU policy engagement.

The seminar began on November 12th with a welcome session, where local representatives and event organizers outlined key objectives, emphasizing the importance of democratic participation in tackling unemployment. The first panel discussion explored unemployment as a core EU policy issue, with experts presenting best practices from different European regions on reducing unemployment and strengthening workforce participation.

A key highlight of the event was the Blended Laboratory Workshop on Drafting the Citizens Manifesto, where participants worked in groups to create policy statements addressing unemployment, teleworking, and EU employment regulations. Contributions came from a diverse range of stakeholders, ensuring that the Manifesto reflected the perspectives of unemployed citizens, trade unions, policymakers, and education professionals.

The second day of the seminar featured a Roundtable on Voices of Unemployed Citizens, where participants shared personal experiences on job loss, employment barriers, and policy shortcomings. This session provided a human perspective on the statistics and policy discussions from Day 1. Another significant session explored e-Democracy as a tool for inclusive employment policies, emphasizing how digital platforms and participatory democracy can shape transparent and citizen-driven labor policies.

The event concluded with the official presentation and consolidation of the Citizens Manifesto, ensuring that all perspectives were incorporated into a comprehensive and actionable statement. A final Citizens' Open Forum allowed for closing reflections, commitments to action, and networking among participants.

Fostering dialogue between citizens, policymakers, and employment experts, the REcup Project reaffirmed its commitment to empowering European citizens through civic engagement, policy advocacy, and participatory democracy. The Citizens Manifesto produced during this event serves as a powerful statement to influence employment policies at local, national, and European levels, ensuring that the voices of those most affected by unemployment are heard and represented in policymaking.

