

**The REcup Project, under the European program CERV-2022-CITIZENS-TOWN, hosted its Seminar Activity titled “*European Citizens Lab: COVID-19 Effects and Labour Market Challenges*,” from March 24 to 26, 2024, in Novo mesto, Slovenia.**

The fourth event of the REcup project, titled “*European Citizens Lab: COVID-19 Effects and Labour Market Challenges*,” took place from March 24 to 26, 2024, in Novo mesto, Slovenia. The event gathered local unemployed individuals, key stakeholders, and partner representatives from seven countries to examine the impact of COVID-19 on unemployment and labour market challenges across Europe. Each participating organization contributed by bringing unemployed citizens, stakeholders, and partner leaders, ensuring a broad and inclusive discussion on labour market recovery strategies.

The event officially began with a presentation by the Development and Education Center Novo Mesto (DRPDNM), showcasing best practices in addressing unemployment and labour market challenges exacerbated by the pandemic. The first day also featured a REcup Project meeting, where participants reviewed the outcomes of WP1, WP2, and WP3, discussing progress, key findings, and challenges faced so far.

On the second day, the event was formally opened with speeches from the mayor of Novo mesto, Mr. Gregor Macedoni, and the president of DRPDNM, Ms. Branka Bukovec. Each partner country presented their findings under the theme “*Unemployed European Citizens Lab*,” sharing insights on how the pandemic has shaped national labour markets.

A round table and workshop led by A.S.E.L. Romania followed, focusing on mapping employment issues and analyzing the economic impact of COVID-19 on the European Union. Participants engaged in in-depth discussions on how employment policies and social support mechanisms have evolved since the pandemic. In the afternoon, brainstorming sessions led by DRPDNM experts addressed sector-specific employment challenges and necessary recovery measures to uphold democratic values and social stability.

The day concluded with a final round table discussion, where participants presented draft action plans based on the key themes explored during the event.

On the third and final day, participants visited key EU-funded projects in Novo mesto, gaining practical insights into how European funding supports local labour market development. The event concluded with a project management meeting, where attendees evaluated the outcomes of the event and planned future REcup activities.

The fourth REcup event reinforced the project's commitment to fostering inclusive employment policies and strengthening civic participation in shaping labour market solutions. Discussions emphasized the need for digital literacy programs, sustainable employment strategies, and greater representation of unemployed individuals in policy-making.

The REcup project continues to advance its mission of reinforcing European citizenship by equipping communities with tools for meaningful engagement in employment policies and social participation.

