

EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

PROJECT	
Project name and acronym:	Local Voices for Inclusive Communities: Strengthening Diversity and Combating Discrimination in Southeastern Europe – DiverCity
Participant:	PANELLINIOS SYNDESMOS EPIXEIRISEON ILEKTRONIKON EFARMOGON PLIROFORIKIS KAI NEON TEXNOLOGION
PIC number:	933087427

EVENT DESCRIPTION	
Event number :	1
Event name:	Opening Event – "United in Diversity: Launching Local Action Against Discrimination"
Type:	Opening Event
In situ/online:	in-situ
Location:	Siatista, Greece
Date(s):	10th – 13th March 2026
Website(s) (if any):	https://divercity-project.eu/events/
Participants	
Female:	20
Male:	15
Non-binary:	2
From country 1 [Greece]:	15
From country 2 [Italy]:	3
From country 3 [Slovenia]:	5
From country 4 [Serbia]:	5
From country 5 [Cyprus]:	2
From country 6 [Romania]:	3
From country 7 [Albania]:	4

Total number of participants:	37	From total number of countries:	7
Description <i>Provide a short description of the event and its activities.</i>			
The 1st event of the DiverCity project took place in Siatista, Greece from 10 to 13 March 2026, marking the official launch of the initiative and focusing on the role of local communities in combating discrimination and promoting diversity as a source of strength. The meeting brought together project partners, representatives of municipalities, civil society organisations, trainers and local stakeholders, offering participants an in-depth perspective on inclusive governance and community-based approaches in Southeastern Europe. Structured around thematic discussions, keynote speeches and networking activities, the event introduced the project's objectives, methodology and expected outcomes, while fostering collaboration among participating organisations. It highlighted practical strategies to address discrimination, encouraged civic engagement and promoted intercultural dialogue, reflecting the project's core pillars of inclusion, participation and solidarity. The sessions also provided space for knowledge exchange and the identification of transferable practices across partner countries. The opening day began with the arrival of participants and a welcome dinner, creating an informal setting for initial networking and exchange. This was followed by the official opening session, which introduced the DiverCity project and its European dimension, outlining its contribution to strengthening diversity and combating discrimination at the local level. Particular emphasis was placed on the role of municipalities in translating European values into concrete actions within communities. A keynote speech on "The Role of Local Communities in Tackling Discrimination and Racism" set the tone for the discussions, highlighting the importance of local action, citizen participation and institutional cooperation. The session explored the main forms of discrimination affecting communities in Southeastern Europe and underlined the need for inclusive policies, awareness-raising initiatives and active civic involvement. In the end, participants had the chance to exchange thoughts on the topic and a creative dialogue followed. Participants also had the opportunity to explore the town of Siatista, gaining insight into its historical and cultural heritage. The visit illustrated how strong local identity, cultural preservation and community engagement can contribute to social cohesion and reinforce the values of diversity and inclusion within a community context. The second day focused on the theme "Diversity as Strength: Challenges and Best Practices in Southeastern Europe," followed by a panel discussion that brought together representatives from partner countries. Through the exchange of experiences, participants presented successful initiatives, discussed common challenges such as social exclusion, racism and inequality, and explored ways to adapt and replicate effective practices in their local contexts. In addition, participants engaged in interactive roundtable discussions organised into three thematic groups. The first group explored the question "What positive examples of inclusion exist in your area?", encouraging participants to reflect on successful local practices and community-driven initiatives. The second group discussed "How can people from different backgrounds understand each other better?", focusing on intercultural dialogue, education and communication as key tools for mutual understanding. The third group addressed "What are the challenges diverse communities face in Southeastern Europe today?", identifying common regional issues such as discrimination, social exclusion and limited access to opportunities. These discussions created a dynamic and participatory environment, allowing participants to share personal perspectives and lived experiences. Notably, two participants who had migrated from Ukraine shared their personal journeys as successful examples of integration, highlighting the importance of community support, access to opportunities and social acceptance. Participants from Albania contributed ideas on strengthening regional cooperation and inclusion, including proposals to further integrate the Balkans into the European context through initiatives such as slow tourism, promoting cultural exchange and sustainable local development. A closing discussion allowed participants to synthesise insights gained from institutional, educational and cultural perspectives. The session also played a key role in shaping the direction of future project activities, as participants collectively reflected on priorities, needs and expectations. Particular emphasis was placed on the importance of dialogue between municipalities and civil society organisations to ensure that local realities are effectively addressed. The group identified several transferable practices relevant to their local contexts, reinforcing the value of practical, community-based approaches to inclusion and diversity. Certificates of attendance were awarded as well. In the afternoon, participants took part in a cultural visit in Siatista, where they explored a traditional mansion accompanied by a guide, gaining insight into the town's rich history, architectural heritage and			

local traditions. The visit continued with a stop at a local winery, where participants were introduced to the region's wine production and cultural significance, offering a deeper understanding of local identity and community life.

The day concluded with a short evaluation session followed by a social dinner, offering participants valuable space for networking and informal exchange. Hosted in a local restaurant, the dinner provided an opportunity to experience traditional cuisine, allowing participants to explore local flavours while continuing discussions in a relaxed and convivial atmosphere. This setting further strengthened interpersonal connections and fostered a sense of community among participants.

Opening Event's Agenda

March 10, 2026

20:00 – 22: 00 Welcome Dinner

An informal opportunity for networking among partners, aimed at strengthening European collaboration networks dedicated to social solidarity

March 11, 2026 Project Presentation & Keynote Speech

Venue: Kek Orama, Ioannidi Street, no. 1, Siatista, Greece

09:00 – 10:30 Breakfast

10:30 – 11:00 Participant Registration

11:00 – 11:30 Opening Session: Presentation of the Project, Partners & Objectives.

11:30 – 12:00 Keynote Speech on “The Role of Local Communities in Tackling Discrimination & Racism”

12:00 – 13:00 Discussions on the topic of local communities as a tool against discriminations & exchange of thoughts and opinions

Direct dialogue among participants

13:00 – 14:00 Lunch

14:00 – 16:00 Interactive Session

16:00 – 16:45: Brief evaluation

17:00- 20:00 Free time to explore Siatista

20:00 Social Dinner

March 12, 2026

09:00 – 10:00 Breakfast

10:30 – 11:00 Welcome Session

Discussion on the role of local administration in developing inclusion policies and support for diverse communities.

11:00 – 12:00 Panel Discussion on “Diversity as Strength: Challenges and Best Practices in Southeastern Europe”

12:00 – 13:30 Roundtable Discussions on 3 thematic topics: a) Possible examples of inclusion, b) communication among people from different cultures, c) Challenges of diverse communities in Southeastern Europe

13:30- 14:00 Final Discussions and Conclusion of session

14:00 – 14:30 Lunch

14:30 – 15:30 Site Visit to a traditional mention in Siatista

15:30 – 17:00 Visit to the winery of Siatista

20:00 – 21:00 Social Dinner

March 13, 2026

09:00 – 10:00 Breakfast

Departure of participants

Dissemination Activities

The DiverCity opening event in Siatista, Greece, held from 10 to 13 March 2026, involved representatives of partner institutions, NGOs, municipalities and stakeholders from various organisations active in the project's thematic areas. The event created opportunities for exchanging experience, sharing good practices and reflecting on local approaches to tackling discrimination and racism, as well as in the important of local communities.

A project poster and banner were displayed throughout the event to ensure clear visibility for participants. Informational materials, including a roll-up banner and printed content presenting the DiverCity project, were placed in the entrance area of the venue, offering visitors an overview of its objectives, activities and ongoing work. Additionally, a project website has been developed in order to share all the necessary information of each event:

A website post has also been done at coordinator's website in order to ensure content and goals of the project is widespread: <https://psict.gr/index.php/news/divercity-project-in-siatista/>

Furthermore, information about the project's meetings and activities was disseminated through personal Facebook posts, contributing to community visibility and public awareness.

https://www.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=10242620958161446&id=1272103303&mibextid=wwXlfr&rdid=AeeH19fUXmJAVxvG#

The event was co-funded by the European Union and hosted as part of the DiverCity project's mission to strengthen civic engagement and promote inclusive practices across Europe. These dissemination actions support the visibility of the project, encourage community participation and contribute to the transfer of good practices to other regions. Moreover, a short article with photos was posted on project's website:

<https://divercity-project.eu/wp1/>

Conclusions

The first DiverCity meeting in Siatista delivered tangible results by strengthening networking among partners and fostering meaningful exchanges on how local communities can address racism and discrimination in practice. Through keynote speeches and interactive roundtables, participants shared concrete experiences, including personal integration stories from migrant participants, which enriched the dialogue with real-life perspectives and highlighted both challenges and successful approaches. The discussions reinforced the importance of inclusive local policies, active citizen engagement, and intercultural dialogue, while the visit to the traditional house of Siatista further emphasized the role of cultural heritage in promoting mutual understanding. It also created momentum for the upcoming project activities, encouraging continuous collaboration and knowledge-sharing among partners. Building on this strong start, the consortium is well-positioned to further develop impactful local actions and deepen its contribution to the objectives of the CERV program.

Overall, this first gathering not only strengthened partnerships and trust among participating towns and organizations, but also generated practical ideas, transferable practices, and a renewed collective commitment to building more inclusive and resilient communities across Europe.

HISTORY OF CHANGES		
VERSION	PUBLICATION DATE	CHANGE
1.0	01.04.2022	Initial version (new MFF).