

EU funding programmes 2021-2027 in culture, media, education, youth and sports: first lessons, challenges and future perspectives : Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) – Strand 3 “Citizens’ engagement and participation”



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The study

analyses the early implementation of “Citizens’ engagement and participation”, of the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) programme and provides a description of the barriers identified.

The Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme 2021-2027 (CERV) is the successor of two EU programmes: the Rights, Equality and Citizenship programme 2014-2020 (REC) and the Europe for Citizens programme 2014-2020.

Strand 3 of the four CERV Strands brings together the citizenship elements of the two predecessor programmes.

Another weakness is that one-third of the Member States do not have National Contact Points (NCPs).



CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Main observations

A fundamental strength of the CERV Strand 3 programme is that **it has integrated all rights and values programmes into a single system**. This has many benefits, as the fragmented nature and limited resources of the predecessor programmes had restricted the ability to respond to new and emerging challenges.

The strong societal focus of the CERV programme, including Strand 3, means that **CERV activities contribute to European social well-being**.

Another strength is that **gender equality is well-integrated into the programme**.

However, despite the Commission’s measures, there is still room for improvement in terms of the administrative burden placed on applicants and on beneficiaries, especially related to the current IT tool.

Conclusions and policy recommendations

The following set of recommendations can be formulated based on the analysis carried out:

Recommendation 1: Establish a network of national contact points for CERV

It is recommended that a NCP is established for each Member State to ensure efficient and effective support for applicants, stakeholders and beneficiaries of the CERV programme. Contact points should serve as reliable sources of unbiased advice, providing valuable information and assistance throughout the application process.

Recommendation 2: Prioritise communication and awareness-raising activities



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The European Commission could prioritise communication and awareness-raising efforts for the CERV programme, as it is still relatively new. To ensure effective campaigns, the European Commission could collaborate with local civil society organisations (CSOs) and programme operators. It is more likely to encourage potential beneficiaries in the CSO community to engage, leading to better organised and implemented information campaigns at the local level.

Recommendation 3: Strengthen the network of CERV beneficiaries

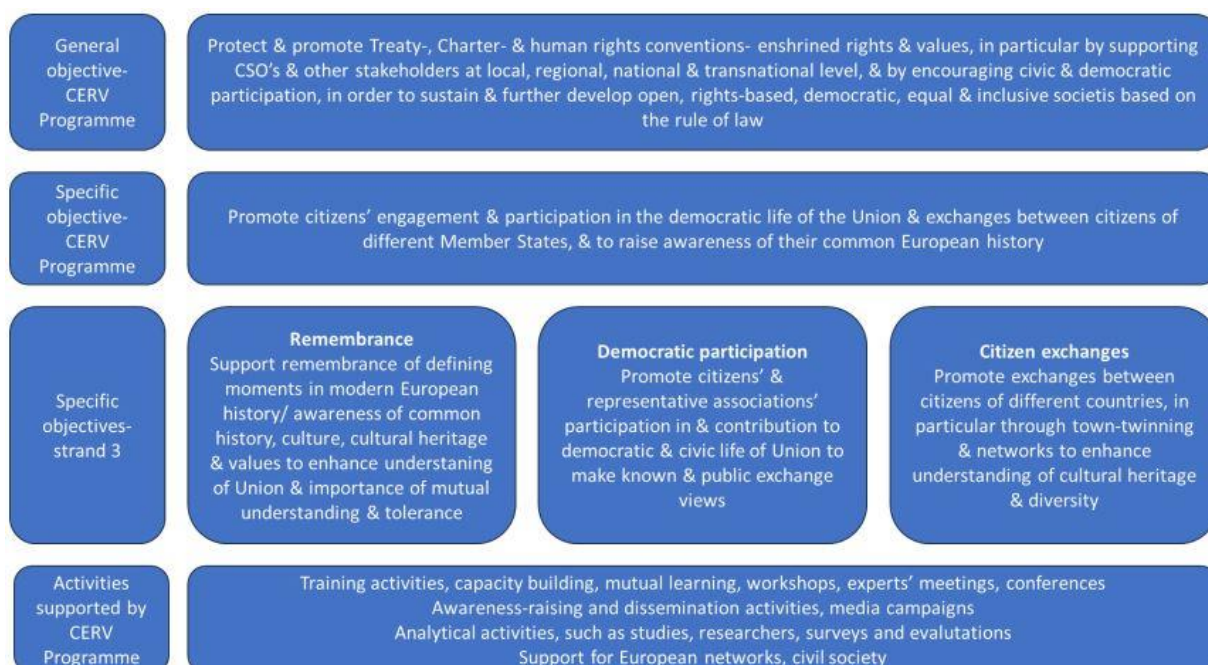
The European Commission and the NCPs could help to coordinate and foster a stronger network of beneficiaries within the CERV programme, particularly emphasising the importance of knowledge sharing and the exchange of best practices under Strand 3.

Recommendation 4: Simplify application submission procedures

The European Commission could consider conducting a thorough analysis to identify processes that can be further simplified such as more user-friendly application submission platform.

Recommendation 5: Simplify and improve the adaption of the current IT tool

Strand 3 within the CERV programme



Source: Own elaboration. [Breakdown of activities by type from EACEA](#)

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