EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET – LOCAL

(To be filled in and uploaded as deliverable in the Portal Grant Management System, at the due date foreseen in the system.

⚠ *Please provide one sheet per event (one event = one workpackage = one lump sum).)*

PROJECT	
Participant:	1 - ASSOCIAZIONE PER L'AMBASCIATA DELLA DEMOCRAZIA (ADL) a Zavidovici
PIC number:	905168984
Project name and acronym:	Participatory Action for Community Transformation in Europe - PACT

EVENT DESCRIPTION	
Event number:	4
Event name:	LA NOSTRA VOCE, LA NOSTRA CITTÀ
Type:	Workshop
In situ/online:	*In situ*
Location:	Italy, Brescia
Date(s):	27/09/2026 - 16/11/2026 - 23/11/2026
Website(s) (if any):	https://www.adl-zavidovici.eu/2026/09/24/la-nostra-voce-la-nostra-citta-un-percorso-sulla-partecipazione-e-sulla-vita-pubblica/
How did you publicize the event? (attach poster or social media link)	ADL published the event poster on its website and asked members of the minority communities involved to share it within their communities. ADL also invited citizens who had participated in previous meetings and encouraged them to spread the word about the event.
Participants	
Female:	15

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Male:	13		
Non-binary:			
Other			
From country 1 [name]:			
From country 2 [name]:			
From country 3 [name]:			
From Local authorities/Municipalities	1		
CSOs/NGOs	5		
Minority-led organisations	10		
Total number of participants:	28	From total number of countries:	1

Description

Provide a short description of the event and its activities.

Context and Objectives

The workshop *Our Voice, Our City (La nostra voce, La nostra città)* was organised within WP4 of the PACT project to reflect on the conditions that enable or hinder the participation of minorities in public life and local decision-making processes. In particular, WP4 aims to develop innovative solutions through a participatory process to promote the participation of underrepresented ethnic and national minorities in local governance.

For the minority group ADL is working with, namely young people from the Muslim community, one of the main barriers to participation is the fear of prejudice and hate speech they may face when attending public spaces and events. In this context, addressing hate speech and the way minorities are represented is particularly important, as these factors can influence young people's willingness to take part in public life and feel that they belong.

The activity focused on the relationship between narratives, representation and participation. When minorities are portrayed by others through stereotypes, prejudice or hate speech, what opportunities do they have to define their own identity, share their experiences and take part in public debate?

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The workshop was designed in collaboration with Ron Salaj, a Council of Europe trainer and researcher with experience in participation, communication and human rights education. His contribution was chosen because of his experience in facilitating participatory processes and working on the construction of narratives, connecting the issue of hate speech with the representation of minorities and their participation in public life.

The preparation of the activity took into account some of the main barriers identified during WP3, including language barriers, prejudice and discrimination, as well as the limited representation of minorities in public spaces and decision-making processes. The aim was therefore not to address hate speech as an isolated topic, but to use it as a starting point for a broader reflection on how people and communities are represented and how this representation can affect their opportunities to participate.

Activity Description

The workshop took place in Brescia on 27 September 2026, as part of WP4. The activity was positively received and provided an important opportunity to reflect on the relationship between narratives, representation, hate speech and participation. The invited participants included Raisa Labaran, representing the Municipality of Brescia, members of CCIB (Islamic Cultural Centre of Brescia) and ASMB (Association of Muslim Students of Brescia). The invitation was also open to the wider public, involving people who live and work in the local area.

Ron Salaj guided the group through a participatory process based on interactive exercises, individual reflection and group discussions.

The activity began with a positioning exercise in which participants were invited to express their agreement or disagreement with statements concerning their knowledge and recognition of hate speech, experiences of discrimination and racism, and their ability to intervene or support people who experience these forms of abuse. Participants were not required to explain their choices or necessarily share personal experiences, allowing everyone to decide how much they wanted to share.

Participants then worked in small groups and took part in a plenary discussion to analyse examples of hate speech, reflecting on their seriousness and possible effects. The discussion explored the role of language, stereotypes and prejudice, as well as the importance of context, the people targeted by a message and the consequences it can have, particularly in terms of participation in public life. These issues were also connected to human rights and different forms of discrimination.

The exercises provided a common starting point for addressing a broader question: how do public narratives shape the image of minorities, and how can they influence the recognition of their voices and their participation in city life?

Main Reflections

One of the most significant aspects of the process was the recognition that representation is not only a matter of communication towards the outside world, but also an internal process within communities.

Minorities are often described and defined by others through narratives that may be influenced by stereotypes, prejudice and hate speech. These representations can affect how people are perceived

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by society, but also how they understand and construct their own identities. In some cases, a community's identity may also develop in response to discrimination and the negative narratives surrounding it.

It is therefore important to create the conditions for people and communities to tell their own stories, choose which aspects of their experiences they want to share and decide how they wish to present themselves in the public sphere. The ability to develop their own narratives can help strengthen their capacity to participate in public debate and engage with institutions and the wider community.

However, this process is complex, particularly when working with people with a migration background or belonging to religious minorities. Identities may include religious, national, cultural and generational dimensions that intersect without necessarily coinciding. Belonging to the same community, for example a religious community, does not mean that everyone shares the same experiences, needs or ways of relating to society.

This raises a central question for work on participation: how can communities be supported in developing a shared representation without overlooking internal differences or reducing people to a single identity?

The importance of creating spaces where different voices can meet and contribute to the development of shared narratives emerged clearly from the discussion. At the same time, these spaces need to recognise the diversity of experiences within communities. They can encourage greater awareness within the communities themselves and strengthen opportunities for dialogue with institutions and the wider public.

The workshop also highlighted the importance of continuing this work within the community itself. While the WP4 activity created an opportunity for discussion between community members, institutions and other local participants, it became clear that further reflection was needed to explore the issues in greater depth, particularly in relation to participation, the fear of prejudice and hate speech, and the ways in which these factors can influence young people's presence in public spaces and events.

Challenges and Next Steps

The process highlighted that promoting participation requires time and continuity. It is not enough to organise meetings between communities, institutions and citizens. It is also important to support opportunities for discussion within communities themselves, so that people can reflect on their experiences, discuss differences and identify shared ways of being present in the public sphere.

Following the positive experience of the WP4 workshop, ADL therefore decided to organise two additional meetings on 16 and 23 November 2026 at the Islamic Cultural Centre of Brescia. These meetings are being organised outside the activities and deadlines formally scheduled within the PACT project, in order to ensure continuity and allow the community to further explore the themes introduced during the September workshop.

The two meetings will focus on participation, narratives, representation, identity and hate speech. They will provide further opportunities for discussion within the Muslim community, allowing young people to reflect on the barriers they experience, explore how prejudice and hate speech can affect

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their willingness to participate in public life, and consider how they can represent themselves and make their voices heard.

This additional work also aims to help prepare the community for the upcoming WP6 meeting, supporting participants in reflecting on their experiences and perspectives before engaging in the next phase of the project. The intention is to build on the work started in WP4 and strengthen the community's capacity to take part in future discussions and activities.

This step is important to ensure that the development of a shared narrative is not understood as a uniform process that leaves no room for the different perspectives and experiences within a community. It also recognises that meaningful participation requires not only opportunities to engage with institutions and the wider public, but also time and space for communities to reflect on their own experiences and identify their priorities.

A further reflection concerns how different approaches to tackling discrimination can engage with one another. Alongside its activities with the Muslim community on narratives, representation and hate speech, ADL also runs an anti-discrimination centre dedicated to LGBTQIA+ people.

These areas of work can involve certain tensions, particularly regarding queer issues, which may be perceived as conflicting with some views within the community. Such tensions can make it more difficult to create opportunities for dialogue and collaboration between organisations working to combat discrimination but which do not always share the same perspectives.

This is also a challenge for ADL, which needs to bring together different perspectives, needs and sensitivities without overlooking possible disagreements. It raises an important question: how can dialogue between different experiences of discrimination be encouraged and potential alliances developed without simplifying differences or expecting them to be necessarily overcome?

This reflection does not mean that different positions should be considered equivalent. Rather, it invites us to consider how tensions can be addressed while keeping spaces for discussion open and recognising the dignity and rights of everyone involved.

The work initiated through PACT therefore represents a starting point for exploring how organisations and institutions can support more inclusive participation, recognise the complexity of identities and value people's ability to represent themselves. From this perspective, developing solutions is not only about creating opportunities for participation in the public sphere, but also about supporting the processes through which communities reflect on their experiences, recognise their differences and identify ways to contribute to public life. The additional meetings planned for November are a concrete step in this direction, allowing ADL to continue the work initiated within WP4 and support the community's involvement in the next stages of the project.

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