

EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

PROJECT	
Participant:	1 - UDRUZENJE AGENCIJA LOKALNE DEMOKRATIJE IZ MOSTARA (LDA Mostar)
PIC number:	936343329
Project name and acronym:	Regional Ownership of Our Tomorrow: Citizens and Civil Society Growing EU Values in the Western Balkans — ROOT WB

EVENT DESCRIPTION	
Event number:	1
Event name:	Kick-off Conference - Building a Regional Vision for Civil Society
Type:	Conference
In situ/online:	in-situ
Location:	Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mostar
Date(s):	12-13 March, 2026
Website(s) (if any):	https://www.ldamostar.org/en/portfolio/root-wb-regional-ownership-of-our-tomorrow-strengthening-civic-participation-and-eu-values/
Participants	
Female:	43
Male:	14
Non-binary:	0
From country 1 [Albania]:	5
From country 2 [Bosnia and Herzegovina]:	31
From country 3 [Croatia]:	3
From country 4 [France]:	2
From country 5 [Montenegro]:	4
From country 6 [North Macedonia]:	7
From country 7 [Serbia]:	5
Total number of participants:	57
From total number of countries:	7
Description	

Provide a short description of the event and its activities.

Project overview

The ROOT WB – Regional Ownership of Our Tomorrow project (101252694) is a two-year regional initiative supported under the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) programme of the European Union. The project is focused on strengthening regional cooperation, democratic participation, and civic engagement across the Western Balkans by bringing together civil society organisations, local authorities, and other relevant stakeholders.

The main objective of the project is to strengthen the enabling environment for civil society in Western Balkan countries by enhancing civic engagement, supporting democratic participation, and promoting EU values through regional cooperation and dialogue.

Within this framework, Work Package 1 covers project coordination and governance, including the organisation of the Kick-Off Conference with the following objectives:

- Officially launch the project and present its goals, structure, and expected outcomes to a broad regional audience.
- Introduce the consortium and build early visibility for the project among stakeholders.
- Facilitate initial networking, trust-building, and alignment of priorities between civil society organizations, local authorities, and EU representatives.
- Create a shared understanding of the project's vision and encourage ownership and collaboration across all participating countries.
- Align partners on implementation, coordination, and reporting establish the Steering Committee and define its role

Basic information about the event

The Kick-off Conference of the ROOT WB project was held on 12–13 March 2026 in Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina. The event was organised by Local Democracy Agency Mostar (LDA Mostar) and took place at the premisses of Hotel Mostar.

A total of 71 participants (including 14 representatives of project consortium) attended the event, coming from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia, North Macedonia, and France. Participants included representatives of civil society organisations, local authorities, associations of municipalities, international organisations, and project partners ensuring a strong regional and cross-sectoral dimension.

Out of 57 direct eligible participants, target groups included:

- civil society organisations (32)
- local and regional authorities (10)
- associations of local authorities (4)
- international organisations and institutions (9)
- media (1)
- business (1)

The Conference was followed by a Steering Committee meeting focused on governance and coordination of project activities.

Conference Title: Kick-Off Conference “Europe for Citizens – values that connect us”

LDA Mostar drafted the agenda in cooperation with partners.

March 12, 2026

09:30 – 10:00	Registration
10:00 – 10:30	Opening Session

	Welcome & Official Opening <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dženana Dedić, Director of Local Democracy Agency Mostar (LDA Mostar) • Nihada Butković, Senior Advisor for Civil Society Development, Ministry of Justice of Bosnia and Herzegovina • Miroslav Landeka, City of Mostar 	
10:30 – 10:50	Introducing ROOT WB	
	Project Vision, Objectives, and Regional Relevance Presentation by: Jelena Krešić, ROOT WB Project Coordinator, LDA Mostar	
10:50 -11:30	Panel 1: Facing the challenges of regional cooperation in the WB	
	Milica Radojičić, Deputy Secretary General for International Cooperation and EU Integration at the Union of Municipalities of Montenegro	The role of local authorities in regional cooperation
	Nikola Jazadziski, Secretary of the European Movement in North Macedonia (EMMK) and Project Coordinator at the National Convention on the EU	The role of civil society in restoring regional relations
	Maja Varoshlija, Project Manager, European Association for Local Democracy (ALDA)	Joint actions by local authorities and civil society to strengthen regional cooperation
	Ljubica Vranjković, Assistant Director for European, Office for the European Integration of the Government of West Herzegovina Canton	EU Integration of the Western Balkans in Today's Geopolitical Context: Local-Level Implementation through Cooperation between Local Authorities and Civil Society
	Q&A: Slido	
11:30 – 12:00	Coffee Break	
12:00–12:40	Panel 2: Civic Engagement in Practice & Local Impact	
	Dženana Dedić, Director of Local Democracy Agency Mostar (LDA Mostar)	Citizen participation and democratic innovations (examples of local initiatives engaging citizens)
	Paula Raužan, President of Local Democracy Agency Sisak (LDA Sisak)	Strengthening civil society and civic space (protecting civic rights and marginalized groups)
	Dajana Cvjetković, Program Manager, Center for Civil Society Promotion (CPCD)	Local success stories (projects and initiatives with visible local impact)
	Dejana Dizdar, Secretary of the Secretariat education, youth and sports in the royal capital Cetinje, Montenegro	Local collaboration in Action (examples of effective cooperation between local authorities,

		citizens, youth, and civil society organizations)
	Q&A: Slido	
12:40 – 13:00	Panel Conclusion and EU Justice Survey	
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch Break	
14:00 – 15:00	World Café Session: Civic Engagement in Practice	
	<p>World Café – Table 1: How Citizens Can Shape Democracy: Youth, Women, and Community Engagement</p> <p>Facilitator: <i>Nevenka Vuksanović</i>, director of Center for Democracy and Human Rights (CEDEM)</p> <p>World Café – Table 2: Protecting Civic Space: Strengthening Civil Society and Citizens' Rights</p> <p>Facilitator: <i>Isidora Stakić</i>, Senior Researcher, Belgrade Centre for Security Policy (BCSP)</p> <p>World Café – Table 3: Working Together Across Borders: Regional Cooperation and EU Values in Practice</p> <p>Facilitator: <i>Stefan Dimkovski</i>, European Movement in Republic of North Macedonia (EMMK)</p>	
15:00 – 15:15	Closing remarks:	
	Dženana Dedić, Director of LDA Mostar	
16:00 – 17:00	Walking Tour for Visiting Participants: "Roads of invisible Mostar women" (<i>Tour language: English</i>)	
Conference language: local language B/H/S + English interpretation		

1st Steering Committee Meeting

March 13th, 2026

09:30 – 09:45	Project Steering Committee (SC) Establishment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Signing of the Decision on Establishment
09:45 – 10:00	Kick-off Conference Follow-Up
10:00 – 10:30	Project Management, Quality Assurance and Monitoring and Evaluation Plan Presentation
10:30 – 10:45	Promotion and Dissemination Plan Presentation
10:45 – 11:45	Next Steps and Upcoming Project Activities
Ongoing activities throughout the project (M1–M24):	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WP7 – Policy Watch: Civil Society and Democratic Resilience in the Western Balkans (BCSP) WP10 – Policy and Dialogue Hub (Online) (LDA Mostar) 	

- WP11 – Gathering Citizen Feedback Across the Western Balkans (CEDEM)
- WP12 – Promotion & Dissemination (LDA Mostar)

Activities starting within the first 4-7 months:

- WP2 – Baseline Mapping & Needs Assessment (CEDEM, M4–M6)
- WP6 – Civic Participation Campaigns (NALAS, M6–M22)
- WP3 – Capacity-Building Academy for CSOs and Youth Activists (ACT-Center, M7–M8)

11:45 – 12:00	Signing Bilateral Agreements (hard copies)
	Any Other Business (AOB)

Description of the Activities

Over the course of two days 71 participants (including 14 consortium representatives) from 7 countries engaged in the activities organised by the project.

The preparation of the event involved close coordination among project partners, led by the LDA Mostar. This included developing the agenda, identifying and inviting participants, organising logistics, and preparing communication and visibility materials in line with EU requirements.

Efforts were made to ensure balanced participation across countries and sectors, as well as smooth communication during the event, including interpretation support.

Day 1 – Kick-Off Conference – March 12th, 2026

The first day was dedicated to the official launch of the project.

The conference started with registration and opening remarks from representatives of the project leader, LDA Mostar, and institutional stakeholders, representative of the City of Mostar and representative of the Ministry of Justice of Bosnia and Herzegovina which is the main national contact point for the CERV programme. The opening session highlighted the importance of regional cooperation and the relevance of the project in the broader context of EU values and democratic development.

The project was then presented in more detail, including its objectives, structure, and expected outcomes by LDA Mostar project coordinator. Project partners were introduced, along with their roles within the consortium.

This was followed by two panel discussions focusing on regional cooperation, the role of civil society and local authorities, and the importance of civic engagement. Panelist were the representatives of CSOs, institutions, local authorities as well as the representatives of project partners. Participants had the opportunity to exchange views and share experiences from their respective contexts.

Two thematic panels addressed key challenges and opportunities:

- **Panel 1: Regional Cooperation in the Western Balkans**
Focused on the role of local authorities and civil society in rebuilding trust, strengthening cooperation, and advancing EU integration in a complex geopolitical context.
- **Panel 2: Civic Engagement and Local Impact**
Presented practical examples of citizen participation, protection of civic space, and successful local initiatives demonstrating tangible community impact.

Key challenges identified included, but not limited to: limited institutional openness, weak civic participation mechanisms and administrative and political barriers to regional cooperation. At the end of each panel Q&A session took place with the active involvement of the participants through online app.

Interactive Component – World Café

A World Café session was also organised, allowing participants to engage in three smaller group discussions around key topics such as civic space, youth and women engagement, and regional cooperation. The format encouraged interaction, networking, and practical exchange of ideas.

Participants concluded that regional cooperation requires overcoming existing administrative and political barriers in the region, as well as challenges such as front organizations and clientelism. It was also emphasized that cooperation should move beyond a project-based approach towards strategic networking, including the exchange of experiences with countries such as France and Croatia that can provide valuable insights from the EU integration process. Additionally, it was concluded that strengthening local communities and grassroots initiatives is essential, with a focus on concrete issues such as climate change, migration, and youth engagement, alongside ensuring transparent collaboration among organizations that demonstrate genuine impact rather than merely declarative support for EU values.

A World Café session enabled participants to actively contribute through structured discussions on:

- youth and women's engagement
- protection of civic space
- cross-border cooperation and EU values in practice

This participatory format significantly enhanced **peer learning, exchange of practices, and co-creation of ideas**.

The day concluded with a short summary of key points and informal networking among participants.

Gender distribution

The event ensured inclusive participation in terms of gender. Out of 57 participants (project consortium representatives excluded): **43 were female (75.4%)** and **14 were male (24.6%)**. This reflects a strong presence of women among participants and contributes to the overall inclusiveness of the event.

Networking and Cultural Dimension

The first day of the event was concluded by thematic walking tour "*Roads of Invisible Mostar Women*", linking local context with EU values such as gender equality and inclusion. Within the walking tour participants visited places in Mostar that mark the generation of women who lived, studied, worked, created in that city. With this, **they wanted to valorize** their strong, but often insufficiently researched and emphasized contribution to the social community.

Communication, Dissemination and Visibility

The ROOT WB Kick-off Conference was actively promoted before, during, and after the event through the official communication channels of the organiser, LDA Mostar, particularly via social media platforms. These efforts ensured timely dissemination of information, visibility of the event, and engagement with a wider audience beyond the direct participants.

Prior to the conference, a media invitation was distributed to relevant media outlets, including key information about the project and event and invitations to media to attend and collect statements. A national radio broadcaster also invited the ROOT WB project coordinator to announce the conference and present the objectives of the project the day before the event.

Following the conference, a press release was issued summarising the key messages, main outcomes, and overall relevance of the event.

The event received significant media coverage both in the announcement phase and after its completion, contributing to increased public awareness of the project and its objectives.

Additionally, project partners and participants and relevant institutions shared social media content related to the event, further supporting dissemination efforts. A detailed article covering the conference was also published on the websites of the partner organisations.

All communication and visibility activities were implemented in line with CERV programme requirements, ensuring proper acknowledgement of EU funding. Visibility materials were prepared in advance in accordance with the project's visual identity and were distributed to participants during the conference.

Although the conference was primarily held in the local languages (Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian) to ensure inclusiveness and active participation, simultaneous interpretation into English was provided, enabling full accessibility for international participants and reinforcing the regional dimension of the event.

Media Outlets Reporting:

<https://youtu.be/9UcgYTIW08Q?si=fOb4MMmAxPzwigp9>

<https://rtv-hb.com/vijesti-bosna-i-hercegovina/u-mostaru-odrzana-pocetna-konferencija-projekta-root-wb>

<https://mostarski.ba/mostar-domacin-regionalne-konferencije-projekta-root-wb-o-jacanju-gradanskog-ucesca/>

<https://bljesak.info/vijesti/bih/foto-konferencija-u-mostaru-bez-suradnje-vlasti-i-gradana-nema-stvarnih-promjena-u-regiji/553805>

<https://mostarski.info/konferencija-europa-za-gradane-vrijednosti-koje-nas-povezuju/>

<https://startbih.ba/clanak/projekt-root-wb-mostar-domacin-regionalne-konferencije-o-jacanju-gradanskog-sudjelovanja/281719>

<https://novasloboda.ba/2026/03/12/mostar-domacin-regionalne-konferencije-projekta-root-wb-o-jacanju-gradanskog-ucesca/>

<https://www.fena.ba/article/1669562/projekt-root-wb-mostar-domacin-regionalne-konferencije-o-jacanju-gradanskog-sudjelovanja>

<https://mostarski.ba/mostar-domacin-konferencije-o-ulozu-civilnog-drustva-u-evropskim-integracijama/>

<https://bljesak.info/vijesti/bih/regionalna-konferencija-u-mostaru-o-evropskim-integracijama-i-ulozu-gradana/553534>

<https://www.vecernji.ba/amp/vijesti/predstavnici-vladinog-i-nevladinog-sektora-iz-zemalja-zapadnog-balkana-i-evropske-unije-u-mostaru-1941882>

<https://www.mreza-mira.net/vijesti/clanci/root-wb-regionalna-odgovornost-za-nasu-buducnost-gradani-i-civilno-drustvo-jacaju-evropske-vrijednosti-na-zapadnom-balkanu>

<https://bljesak.info/vijesti/bih/regionalna-konferencija-u-mostaru-o-evropskim-integracijama-i-ulozu-gradana/553534>

<https://bljesak.info/info-vodic/razno/u-mostaru-konferencija-europa-za-gradane-vrijednosti-koje-nas-povezuju/553536>

Social Media Posts:

<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1355369413297752&set=a.635846608583373>

https://www.instagram.com/p/DVqpP_dCNLW/?igsh=MWRmY3F3MjN3NnVwaw==

https://www.linkedin.com/posts/ldamostar_ldamostar-cerv-ldamostar-activity-7436851056401104896-Bfty?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_android&rcm=ACoAADXUPYIBdRCIsjbHHv7W-yeJhtl8aV63328

<https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=1356137573220936&set=pcb.1356159096552117>

<https://www.instagram.com/p/DVs8K9XCG2D/?igsh=MXy2dmh1aXdINzRzbA==>

https://www.linkedin.com/posts/ldamostar_rootwb-rootwb-ldamostar-activity-7437134139587469313-LQ1H?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_android&rcm=ACoAADXUPYIBdRCIsjbHHv7W-yeJhtl8aV63328

<https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=1357913433043350&set=pcb.1357914779709882>

<https://www.instagram.com/p/DVylZErCFEf/?igsh=aXJwcTlmbnczem5y>

https://www.linkedin.com/posts/ldamostar_rootwb-cerv-ldamostar-activity-7437924976407691264-C3SC?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_android&rcm=ACoAADXUPYIBdRCIsjbHHv7W-yeJhtl8aV63328

https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=pfbid0JJHVq4Qy4dqKcqueDYeuky3dQqTkfHV1N9WVjszhUCAEJi48sed9DPgmzd3VCELI&id=100080716278896

https://www.instagram.com/p/DVzAO3NjANQ/?img_index=1

<https://www.facebook.com/reel/1410295763634255>

<https://www.instagram.com/p/DVye4LvDHiU/>

<https://www.facebook.com/civilnodrustvoBiH/posts/pfbid02hYNdhZxoRiDEj8cmcRmsk9iUu7JuNWVwAYh1b6si9yAK6M96e2i82xZodiYZs9QKI>

https://www.linkedin.com/posts/centar-za-promociju-civilnog-dru%C5%A1tva_cpcd-civilsociety-civicengagement-activity-7437960971559546880-VODi?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop&rcm=ACoAADF9N5QBemFiVNpwNt-xzGKbiaLwRICqDFE

Partner Websites:

<https://www.alda-europe.eu/root-wb-project-launch-mostar/>

<https://www.ldamostar.org/citizens-as-architects-of-change-mostar-welcomes-a-new-regional-initiative/>

<https://lda-sisak.hr/pocetna-konferencija-projekta-root-wb-regionalna-odgovornost-za-nasu-buducnost/>

<https://europeanmovement.org.mk/pocetna-konferencija-na-projektot-root-wb-evropa-za-graganite-vrednosti-shto-ne-povzuvaat/>

Day 2 – Steering Committee Meeting - March 12th, 2026

The second day was dedicated to the Steering Committee meeting.

During this session, project partners discussed governance arrangements, coordination mechanisms, and key aspects of project implementation. Topics included reporting procedures, communication flows, roles and responsibilities, and the overall timeline of activities.

Partners also reviewed the structure of the work packages and agreed on next steps. Monitoring and evaluation approaches, as well as dissemination and communication plans, were presented and discussed.

The meeting ended with the formal establishment of the Steering Committee by signing the Decision

on the Appointment of the Steering Committee (SC) of the project. It was decided that one representative of each project partner and two representatives of lead partner will form project Steering Committee. The Steering Committee shall be responsible for:

- Approving work packages and major project activities.
- Resolving conflicts within the consortium.
- Monitoring the alignment of the project's implementation with the overall objectives.
- Ensuring that all partners are actively involved and contributing to decision-making.

Other stakeholders and experts may be invited to attend Steering Committee meetings on an ad hoc basis, when relevant to specific agenda items. Steering Committee meetings will be held quarterly in accordance with the project action plan. All coordination and decision-making processes within the Steering Committee will be conducted through a participatory and collaborative approach among project partners.

Key outputs and Results

The main results of the Kick-off Event include:

- official launch of the ROOT WB project
- presentation and promotion of the project framework and objectives
- networking among partners and stakeholders
- establishment of the Steering Committee
- improved understanding of roles, responsibilities, and implementation procedures
- strengthened regional cooperation among participants
- increased awareness of EU values and civic engagement

Monitoring and Evaluation

EU Survey Justice, Rights and Values

During the event, participants were invited to complete the EU Survey. The Survey aimed to capture participants' perceptions of the event in terms of knowledge gained, awareness of EU values, and the relevance of the topics discussed. The event was evaluated by 24 participants, mainly from the civil society sector, and received an overall average score of 4.88/5, with 87.5% giving the highest rating.

The feedback indicates a generally positive assessment of the event, with participants reporting an improved understanding of civic engagement and increased awareness of EU-related topics.

Participants reported strong benefits in terms of increased awareness, knowledge, and cooperation, as well as a clear impact on attitudes and behaviour, with over 90% indicating changes in perception and future actions, and nearly all planning to apply what they learned.

The event was praised for its organisation, positive atmosphere, and networking opportunities, enabling exchange among a diverse group of stakeholders from the EU and Western Balkans region.

While inclusiveness was generally recognised, perceptions of gender sensitivity and flexibility were mixed, suggesting room for improvement in these areas.

Overall, the event was highly successful, delivering strong learning outcomes and valuable networking opportunities.

Event Evaluation Survey

In addition to the EU Survey, an event-specific evaluation survey was distributed by e-mail to all participants after the conference. The survey included both quantitative and qualitative questions and focused on participant satisfaction, organisation, content relevance, and overall experience. Altogether 24 participants responded to this survey.

Survey Results

The results of this survey have been analysed and will serve as input for assessing the quality of the event and improving future activities. Project partner CEDEM prepared the survey analysis.

It was concluded that the kick-off conference was highly successful, achieving an overall rating of 9/10, with over 90% of respondents assigning the highest scores to key aspects of the event. Organisational

performance was particularly strong, with 100% of participants rating the agenda as clear and manageable, 91.7% confirming that objectives were clearly communicated, and 87.5% giving the highest score to overall organisation.

The participant structure showed solid regional representation, led by Bosnia and Herzegovina (29.2%), followed by Montenegro and North Macedonia (20.8% each), and Albania (16.7%). However, 58.3% of participants came from civil society organisations, while no respondents were under the age of 25, indicating limited diversity in both sectoral and age representation.

In terms of content and impact, 83.3% of participants found the discussions highly relevant, 87.5% highlighted meaningful exchange, and 83.3% confirmed contributions to regional cooperation. Notably, 100% of respondents reported an improved understanding of EU values, with 70.8% indicating a significant increase, while 79.2% felt more motivated to engage in civic initiatives. Furthermore, 91.7% plan to apply the knowledge gained, and 66.7% established new contacts or partnerships, demonstrating strong potential for sustained impact and future collaboration.

The full survey data analysis is available at the following link:

https://www.ldamostar.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/ROOT-WP_Kick-off-Conference_Survey-data.pdf

Conclusion

The Kick-off Conference successfully launched the ROOT WB project and established a solid foundation for its implementation, ensuring strong visibility and alignment among partners and stakeholders. The event effectively fostered regional cooperation, dialogue, and networking between civil society, local authorities, and other actors, directly contributing to the project's core objectives.

Evaluation results confirm a high level of success (9/10), with 100% of participants reporting improved understanding of EU values and 79.2% increased motivation for civic engagement, while 66.7% established new partnerships. These outcomes demonstrate a strong initial impact in promoting democratic participation and regional collaboration.

Overall, the conference represents a strong starting point for achieving the project's long-term goals, while also highlighting the need for more inclusive participation, particularly of youth, in future activities.

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