

## EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

(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	
<b>Participant:</b>	1 - Coordinadora Europea de Familias Numerosas - European large Families Confederation (ELFAC)
<b>PIC number:</b>	955114478
<b>Project name and acronym:</b>	Better Future Festival — BFF

EVENT DESCRIPTION	
<b>Event number:</b>	D2
<b>Event name:</b>	Welcoming cities : For an EU of solidarity
<b>Type:</b>	Workshop
<b>In situ/online:</b>	<i>In-Situ</i>
<b>Location:</b>	Spain, Creixell
<b>Date(s):</b>	13-15 December 2024
<b>Website(s) (if any):</b>	<a href="https://www.elfac.org/better-future-festival/">https://www.elfac.org/better-future-festival/</a>
Participants	
Female:	52
Male:	46
Non-binary:	-
From country 1 Italy	12
From country 2 Spain	57
From country 3 Poland	9
From country 4 Romania	9
From country 5 Latvia	2
From country 6 Lithuania	2
From country 7 Germany	1
From country 8 Croatia	2
From country 9 Hungary	2

From country 10 Czech Republic	1		
From country 11 Portugal	1		
Total number of participants:	98	From total number of countries:	11

### Description

Provide a short description of the event and its activities.

**Better Future Festival**  
**XII European Congress of Large Families**

WELCOMING CITIES, FOR AN EU OF SOLIDARITY

Creixell (Tarragona, Spain)

#### Saturday, 14 December 2024

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| <p>→ Casal municipal<br/> <b>09.30 Registration</b><br/> <b>10:00 Opening</b><br/> <b>10:15 Awards ceremony</b><br/> <b>10:30 Conferences</b><br/> <b>11.10 Coffe break</b></p> | <p>→ Cultural house Cal Cabaler<br/> <b>11:45 Parallel panels</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Best practices of municipalities</li> <li>• Vision of European youth</li> </ul> <p><b>13: 30 Conclusions and closing</b><br/> <b>14:00 Lunch</b><br/> <b>16:00 Guided visit to Creixell. Street market</b><br/> <b>19:00 Children's choir at the Christmas tree</b></p> |
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#### Sunday, 15 December

**09.30 Guided visit to Tarragona**



The second segment of the Better Future Festival project, managed by the European Network of Family-Friendly municipalities and the European Confederation of Large Families (ELFAC), took place in Creixell, Spain, on December 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024. This event was grant-funded by the Citizens, Equality, Rights, and Values (CERV) call of the EU.

This segment of the Better Future Festival project saw attendance by network cities Alghero (Italy), Bacau (Romania), and Gdynia (Poland). These municipalities were joined by the members of the ELFAC board. The theme of this two-day festival was 'Welcoming cities: for a Europe of Solidarity'.

On December 13<sup>th</sup>, the congress with some experts took place at the Casal Municipal of Creixell. Managed by Creixell's Mayor, Montse Muñoz, and Raul Sanchez, ELFAC's Secretary General, the Congress was focused on family policies, large families, inclusion, and solidarity.

Following the Congress, municipalities attended a best practices workshop, sharing family policies and ideas on inclusivity, equity, and governance, as well as a presentation by youth.

The deliverables from the Creixell event, including the summary of best practices, manifesto of young people, and video of the event, are compiled within this document.

### **The workshop of best practices**

Saturday's workshop involved open discussion between the represented municipalities on good policy and practices for family-friendly cities. The first portion of this document aims to summarize the recommendations and ideas shared within this forum.

The hosting city of **Creixell** began by presenting about the unique challenges faced by the municipality and the resulting adaptive good practices. Creixell is a town of very ancient origins, with a drastic population fluctuation throughout the year, going from only around 4,000 inhabitants in the winter months to over 30,000 during the summer. Creixell recounted the challenges faced by a small municipality that, proudly tied to its roots, requires innovative ways to integrate 'new' citizens. As a portion of this discussion, Creixell shared its "**water march, a tool for integration**" – a creative community water sport activity of which Creixell is a European champion and promoter. The water march is an inclusive practice suitable for people of all ages, as well as tourists, seasonal residents, and year-long residents, and is affordable.

Creixell also presented on another initiative for social participation – the "**Dance of the Devils**" (**Ball de diables**). This practice is a traditional cultural initiative, fostering social inclusion and community action through the bolstering of national heritage traditions. By creating a publicly accessible forum to engage directly with Creixell's rich historical tradition, the municipality effectively worked to foster the integration of new families, youth, and community members. Creixell additionally spoke about the **Erasmus project hosted by the municipality's local primary school**. This initiative involves the local school hosting children of many different nationalities and backgrounds to foster inclusion through intercultural interaction. While integration of students certainly poses several challenges, primary school instructors from Creixell took an additional step to overcome this obstacle, traveling to Italian and Greek schools facing similar issues to exchange best practices concerning the inclusion and integration of migrant children and families in local education systems. This program was an excellent example of how small communities can be enhanced through exchanges and international friendship with other European partners.

The municipality of Bacau (Romania) shared that immigration was a fairly recent phenomenon in their area, which had historically always been associated with emigration. However, for Romania, the crisis in Ukraine caused this situation to change substantially – suddenly, Bacau, a town less than 300km from the Ukrainian border, was faced with an unexpected humanitarian crisis. The Romanian city had to adapt quickly in order to accommodate hundreds of refugees left with few resources. Once this crisis passed, Bacau took in numerous 'new' residents from Ukraine, who decided to remain and work in the city after seeking refuge. Following the provision of aid and humanitarian resources to these refugees, Bacau turned its efforts towards teaching the local language to new residents, fostering integration in the social and working life of the community. Romanian language course programs were established, accounting for both urgency and accessibility in their curriculum and structure.

In respect of diversity, Bacau also shared about their place of integration – a center for migrants to celebrate their traditions, enjoy music, traditional food, and share their individual experiences. For example, for over two hundred workers from Sri Lanka, the municipality offered the opportunity for them to celebrate their traditional New Year's Eve.

Alghero, a municipality in the Sardinian region of Italy, brought an experienced perspective to this segment of the Better Future Festival. Compared to the other three municipalities, Alghero was perhaps the most versed in handling migrants and the need to develop a welcoming culture of tourism, bringing testimony of several initiatives of inclusion and solidarity to the festival. City Councilor Maria Grazia Salari first shared about the city's "Easy Beach" project – an initiative for beach access and livability. As a part of this project, Alghero renovated its beaches with accessibility in mind, creating fitted walkways, showers, fountains, chairs, and support systems for people with disabilities, so that they might share in the enjoyment of city beaches without stress.

Alghero also presented about its "Solidarity Emporium", a tool of support for those in poverty that was created alongside the local Misericordia Association and the social services departments of the Municipality of Alghero. This program promoted active discussion and engagement with those facing

socioeconomic difficulty, thereby encouraging the creation of adaptive and personalized solutions to poverty. First, individuals were welcomed and allowed to share their needs with the project team. Following the interview, individuals were given a card with a score based on their assessment, the number of associated family members, their housing conditions, and their employment status. The card allowed holders to “shop” by purchasing products displayed, using the points assigned to them as opposed to real currency. This initiative aimed to allow those in poverty to maintain autonomy within the local market space, creating a social benefit system based on individual circumstances and freedom of choice.

Another project presented by Alghero, “Junts”, aimed at integrating foreign citizens seeking asylum, holders of international protection, vulnerable individuals, and, most recently, refugees from Ukraine. As a part of this program, each person is provided with housing for a period of six months, which can be renewed. The housing provision follows a decentralized hospitality model that utilizes facilities located in various neighborhoods to encourage cultural exchange and interaction between immigrants and locals. Participants in the Junts program also receive job training and Italian language courses. This program has been astoundingly successful, with a 95% reintegration rate and nearly all participants finding full employment within the municipality. Alghero also briefly shared about the Network of Local Associations, an organization that works with the Alghero Family Policies Offices in various fields: children with disabilities, education, vulnerable families, family welfare, seniors, and more. The full presentation by Alghero on their best practices can be found [here](#).

The municipality of Gdynia (Poland) also shared two interesting best practices. Joanna Zagdan, of the Department of Culture of Gdynia City Hall, presented the project of SPLINO, “together”, which the municipality implements in collaboration with UNICEF. Shortly after the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, six million Ukrainians passed through Poland, a large part remaining. As a part of this migration, 14,000 Ukrainians arrived in Gdynia. After the first emergency period, in which refugees received an identification number that allowed them to get medical help and financial support, Gdynia began to implement a comprehensive policy. The city provided basic support to migrants through accommodations, employment support, and assistance with school enrollment. Following this, Gdynia also developed a space for migrants from Ukraine to meet, celebrate traditional holidays and festivities, learn the local language, receive information, engage in integration activities, and receive psychological support. These services were provided bilingually, in both Polish and Ukrainian. Gdynia also presented about its Museum of Emigration, a space where “emigration meets integration.” The museum includes memorabilia and the stories of the citizens of Gdynia who left to distant countries such as the United States and South America.

In summary, during the workshop during the Creixell segment of the Better Futures Festival project, four different municipalities from four different countries presented their best practices in the realm of integration and inclusivity. Many of these policies focused on the integration of migrants into local communities, including policies for cultural preservation, language education, and intercultural interaction. These municipalities learned from one another how to better handle the challenges of diversity within their own borders, thereby promoting a Europe of solidarity and unity.



**Manifesto of Young People – Creixell, Spain**

During the Better Future Festival event in Creixell, student participants from Poland, Romania, Spain, Hungary, Lithuania, and Italy came together for a panel with the aim of creating a manifesto that outlined the vision of Europe aspired to by young people. This manifesto was developed to highlight desired changes and the expectations placed on local and national governments, as well as on the EU.

This session began with an engaging exercise in which participants identified the five values that they considered most important to them on a personal level. Following this reflection, they discussed their perspectives with one another. Common themes shared by youth participants included the importance of relationships, such as family and friends, the value of safety and health, and the critical need for access to education on all levels. Building on this foundation, participants worked together to identify areas for improvement and recommendations for the European Commission.

Through this discussion, youth identified ten key priorities for future policy and governance in Europe: (1) safety and security, (2) relationships, (3) equality, (4) economic growth and employment, (5) education, (6) healthcare and mental health, (7) technology and AI, (8) climate and environment, (9) political transparency, and (10) empathy and emotional education.

#### 01. Safety and Security

Students agreed that without safety, other priorities become secondary. The perspective that a society must be secure and stable before aspiring to other higher goals was widely held by the group. Along the same line, students agreed that the promotion of peace ought to be one of the primary priorities of the European Union moving forward. War and conflict, student discussants argued, are the most pertinent inhibitors of effective governance and societal flourishing. Therefore, continuing to promote peace both inside and outside of the boundaries of the European Union was a core goal for future progress identified by the youth.

#### 02. Relationships

The importance of individual and community relationships was widely emphasized by youth participants in both the reflection activity and manifesto discussion. Youth argued that policy ought to support and emphasize the importance of strong connections with friends, family, and communities. In the climate of modern Europe, which is facing both drastic declines in birth rates, threatening the family structure, and an epidemic of loneliness, youth participants emphasized the need to reconnect with one another. Through policy that bolsters interpersonal connections, Europe can best heal internal divisions and work towards a unified and productive future.

#### 03. Equality

Youth discussants called on the European Union to continue promoting an inclusive and equitable society for all. Youth identified a need for policy on multiple levels, accommodating those of different linguistic, ethnic, racial, and religious backgrounds. Additionally, youth identified a need to continue emphasizing accessibility as a core pillar of European policy, recognizing the unique needs of those with disabilities.

#### 04. Economic Growth and Employment

During this forum, youth shared their personal experiences with the current economy, including fears surrounding job security, salaries, and the affordability of living. Youth emphasized the need for widespread access to well-paying jobs and opportunities for economic advancement. This included discussions of increased financial education, policies based on market growth and development, and improved housing policy.

#### 05. Education

Another area discussed thoroughly by youth discussants was education. Students called on the European Union to continue increasing access to high-quality education on all levels, from primary school through advanced university. Education, youth argued, is often a requirement for success and mobility within the employment market. As a result, youth identified a necessity for education to not only bolster individual experience through curriculum, but also through experiences and opportunities.

#### 06. Healthcare and Mental Health

Youth discussed the need for improvements in health care systems as well, including the reduction of wait times and the need for increased access to specialty care. Specifically, the youth identified a need to emphasize mental health care. Having grown up in the media generation, student participants shared their own experiences with mental health, which has become an increasing issue on a global scale in recent decades. Youth agreed that increasing accessibility to mental health services for young people

ought to be a core focus of EU policy moving forward, providing the younger generation with the support they need.

#### 07. Technology and AI

Through their discussion, students acknowledged the pervasiveness of technology in modern-day society. As a result, they argued that education on responsible use of technology is a paramount priority for EU policy going forward. Youth shared their own experiences with misinformation and disinformation in the era of online media, underscoring the critical importance of digital literacy. Furthermore, students shared their personal fears about the rapid growth of AI technology, including the threat that AI poses to entry-level jobs. Students argued in favor of policies that promote AI usage as a complement to human roles, as opposed to a replacement for human labor.

Through seeing AI as a tool as opposed to an entity, students argued that it could be best used to promote economic and societal growth while mitigating harm to persons themselves.

#### 08. Climate and Environment

Youth focused heavily on the threat of climate change throughout their discussion, recognizing it as one of the, if not the, most significant threat faced by the younger generation. Young people emphasized the urgent need to address climate change, both inside the EU and through collaborative international policy. Student suggestions included increased preservation policy for natural spaces, bolstered protections for natural resources, and increased effort for a green energy transition.

#### 09. Political Transparency

Youth called upon the EU to increase openness and thereby accountability in the political decision-making process. Students shared individual perspectives on how large-scale and opaque bureaucratic processes effectively leave citizens, including young people, feeling isolated. Greater transparency, therefore, became a key priority for these students, who felt they would better understand politics and, therefore, be better able to influence them if they had greater access to information about legislation, policy, and governmental processes.

#### 10. Empathy and Emotional Education

Lastly, youth introduced the idea of lessons on empathy in schools. The goal of this program would be to foster understanding and compassion among individuals. In the era of globalization, students recognized the challenges presented by increasing levels of immigration across Europe, with societies struggling to integrate individuals with different backgrounds, languages, and religions into their societies. As a result, students argued in favor of empathy-based education, in which younger generations learn the skills necessary to understand and relate to all individuals in their societies, regardless of their background.

### **Cultural events**

Participants could join a very nice concert of piano on Friday 11, and an historical and cultural tour in the city of Creixell on Saturday 12| the same day of the Christmas market; and on Sunday 13 there were a visit to the Roman heritage of the city of Tarragona, finishing with a concert of Christmas carols, with the participation of many families.

### **Event Videos and Media Coverage**

The link to the Creixell Better Future Festival video compilation can be found [here](#).

The photo album from the event can be found [here](#).

News coverage of this event by ELFAC can be found [here](#).

News on media:

<https://diaridigital.tarragona21.com/creixell-esdeve-capital-europea-en-el-suport-a-les-families-nombroses/>

<https://www.algheronews.it/politiche-familiari-alghero-in-catalogna-per-il-better-future-festival/>

<https://www.lavanguardia.com/vida/20241212/10193741/creixell-acogera-congreso-europeo-familias-numerosas-sabado-agenciaslv20241212.amp.html>

<https://fanoc.org/creixell-acull-el-xii-congres-europeu-de-families-nombroses-i-la-ii-trobada-del-projecte-europeu-better-future-festival/>

[https://altafullaradio.cat/noticia/creixell-esdevindra-la-capital-europea-de-les-families-el-dissabte-14-de-desembre\\_n18083?fbclid=IwY2xjawNHki9leHRuA2FibQIxMQABHj6BnZj1bpQXOOyJdi1SgcWkelEP1NkQdYdPb6h44yITM1jqhm1m2R6nFvp4\\_aem\\_dVOIzh7kMMU0EwpQ6oFGCA](https://altafullaradio.cat/noticia/creixell-esdevindra-la-capital-europea-de-les-families-el-dissabte-14-de-desembre_n18083?fbclid=IwY2xjawNHki9leHRuA2FibQIxMQABHj6BnZj1bpQXOOyJdi1SgcWkelEP1NkQdYdPb6h44yITM1jqhm1m2R6nFvp4_aem_dVOIzh7kMMU0EwpQ6oFGCA)

Social media:

[https://www.instagram.com/p/DDux\\_00tBmO/?utm\\_source=ig\\_web\\_copy\\_link](https://www.instagram.com/p/DDux_00tBmO/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link)

<https://www.facebook.com/ELFAC3/posts/creixell-spain-hosted-the-12th-european-congress-of-large-families-and-the-2nd-b/1026747692826588/>

<https://www.facebook.com/100067671082029/posts/-fam%C3%ADlies-creixell-sha-convertit-avui-dissabte-14-de-desembre-de-2024-en-la-capi/912401451025549/>

<https://x.com/AltafullaRadio/status/1864693713940722036>

[https://www.linkedin.com/posts/beata-nawrocka-bea\\_europe-spain-tarragona-activity-7274509862024196096-kYc-?utm\\_source=share&utm\\_medium=member\\_desktop](https://www.linkedin.com/posts/beata-nawrocka-bea_europe-spain-tarragona-activity-7274509862024196096-kYc-?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop)

**HISTORY OF CHANGES**

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