

EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

PROJECT	
Project name and acronym:	Civil Society Solidarity Movement II - CISOMO II
Participant:	Asociatia de Studii Socio-Economice
PIC number:	948744003

EVENT DESCRIPTION	
Event number :	9
Event name:	EMPOWERENGAGE LAB: CITIZENS' LIVING LAB FOR CIVIL ENGAGEMENT AND ADVOCACY
Type:	Study Visit
In situ/online:	in-situ
Location:	Craiova, Romania
Date(s):	27th – 30th October 2025
Website(s) (if any):	https://www.cisomo.eu/thematic-events
Participants	
Female:	46
Male:	22
Non-binary:	2
From country 1 [Greece]:	3
From country 2 [Bulgaria]:	4
From country 3 [Poland]:	3
From country 4 [Slovenia]:	4
From country 5 [Sweden]:	3
From country 6 [Denmark]:	1
From country 7 [Germany]:	3
From country 8 [Romania]:	49
Total number of participants:	70
From total number of countries:	8
Description	

Provide a short description of the event and its activities.

The 9th event of the CISOMO II project took place in Craiova, Romania from 27 to 30 October 2025, focusing on the role of local institutions, community organisations and intercultural dialogue initiatives in promoting integration, civic engagement and community solidarity. The meeting brought together project partners, NGO representatives, trainers, local authorities, community leaders and migrants, offering participants an in-depth perspective on Romania's evolving ecosystem of inclusion.

Structured around thematic discussions and participatory sessions, the visit presented practical approaches to migrant integration, highlighted successful community-based initiatives and illustrated how culture and civic engagement can strengthen social cohesion. Activities reflected the project's three core pillars: integration, civic engagement and solidarity while providing opportunities for knowledge exchange and the identification of transferable practices for implementation in partner countries.

The study visit opened with a welcome and registration session, followed by an introductory presentation by a representative of the General Inspectorate for Immigration, titled **Migration and Romania: Opportunities, Challenges and Multicultural Integration**. The session provided an overview of Romania's migration landscape, distinguishing between different types of mobility and outlining the main factors that bring migrants to the country, including employment, education, family reunification and asylum.

Speakers presented the historical evolution of immigration legislation alongside updated statistics showing Romania's growing diversity: the increase in foreign workers from Nepal, Sri Lanka, Turkey and India and the presence of over 162,000 beneficiaries of temporary protection from Ukraine. The session also highlighted the demographic and economic value brought by immigrants, as well as challenges such as misinformation, xenophobia and labour-market prejudices. A recent incident involving a Bangladeshi worker was discussed as an example of isolated hostility, reinforcing the need for community dialogue and educational initiatives.

Romania's diverse cultural heritage, consisted of Hungarian, Roma, German, Greek, Bulgarian, Serbian, Jewish, Ukrainian, Italian and Tatar communities, was presented as a strong foundation for contemporary integration policies. The roles of institutions and civil society in providing services, guidance, advocacy and community support were emphasised as essential for effective inclusion.

The next session, *Solidarity in Motion: Lessons from Human Flow*, used selected excerpts from the documentary *Human Flow* to facilitate reflection on the human dimension of migration. Participants discussed emotional reactions, forms of solidarity expressed across different European contexts and long-term integration strategies beyond emergency response. The debate also explored how concepts such as home, resilience and belonging are shaped by experiences of displacement.

The group then visited the Museum of the Romanian Exile, which documents the experiences of Romanians forced into exile during the 20th century. The visit offered historical parallels with present-day migration and underlined the importance of cultural memory, empathy and civic awareness in shaping inclusive societies.

In the afternoon, participants engaged in an interactive session with two migrants from the Democratic Republic of Congo and Côte d'Ivoire. Through personal testimonies and visual presentations, they shared cultural and social aspects of their home countries, their migration journeys and the support networks that facilitated their integration in Romania. Their accounts highlighted the importance of intercultural openness, community support and civil society involvement. The session concluded with a traditional Congolese dance, in which participants joined, creating a moment of shared cultural expression.

The day ended with a short evaluation session and a social dinner, offering space for networking and informal exchange.

The second day explored institutional approaches to inclusion, beginning with a visit to Craiova City Hall. Representatives of the local administration discussed municipal strategies for supporting diverse communities, interdepartmental coordination and the development of inclusion policies responsive to local needs.

This was followed by a visit to the Social Assistance Directorate of the Municipality of Craiova, where the city's social support programmes for migrants and refugees were outlined. The session covered operational procedures and the role of early intervention in reducing vulnerability. Participants discussed ways to strengthen community support through collaboration between institutions and civil society.

The team then visited "Elena Cuza" National College, where discussions focused on education as a means of civic formation, active citizenship and intercultural understanding. School staff demonstrated how educational institutions can promote awareness of diversity and support the principles of the EmpowerEngage Lab.

In the afternoon, participants explored the Craiova Art Museum, focusing on culture as an instrument for dialogue and shared identity. The museum's collection provided a framework for discussing how artistic and cultural expression contribute to social cohesion, promote European values and build bridges across communities.

A closing discussion allowed participants to synthesise insights gained from institutional, educational and cultural perspectives. The group identified several transferable practices relevant to their local contexts. Based on the presentations and observations during the Craiova study visit, the Slovenian team selected one of these for immediate implementation: a series of Culinary Workshops featuring Ukrainian, Turkish, Nepalese and Palestinian cuisine. These activities aim to create informal spaces for intercultural exchange and foster community participation. Certificates of attendance were awarded, followed by a social dinner featuring a celebratory cake with the CISOMO II and CERV logos, symbolising team cohesion and shared commitment to the project.

The final day focused on Craiova's cultural heritage, with a guided tour of the historic centre and observation of preparations for the annual Christmas Market, showing how cultural activities contribute to social cohesion and intercultural exchange. The study visit concluded with participants reflecting on key learnings and discussing how to apply them in their local contexts, reinforcing transnational cooperation within the CISOMO II framework.

Study Visit's Agenda

October 27, 2025

19:30 – 20 30 Welcome Dinner

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

October 28, 2025 Dialogues and Perspectives

Venue: Mihail Kogălniceanu Street, no. 9, Craiova, Romania

09:00 – 10:00 Breakfast

10:00 – 10:30 Participant Registration ("Alexandru and Aristia Aman" County Library)

10:30 – 10:35 Presentation of the City of Craiova

Introduction to Craiova's context – an urban space with experience in multicultural and social initiatives.

10:35 – 11:00 General Inspectorate for Immigration

"Migration and Romania: Opportunities, Challenges, and Multicultural Integration"

Overview of national and local policies for migrant integration including practical approaches for citizens to participate in advocacy and support migrant inclusion

11:00 – 11:45 Screening of excerpts from the documentary Human Flow and discussion
 Reflection on the human dimension of migration and Europe's collective responsibility. 12:00 – 12:35
 Site Visit to the Museum of the Romanian Exile
 Exploring the history of Romanian exile as a parallel to contemporary migrations – understanding empathy and cultural resilience.
 13:00 – 14:00 Lunch
 14:00 – 16:00 Interactive Session
 Special guests: two immigrants from the Democratic Republic of Congo and Côte d'Ivoire
 Direct dialogue with migrants integrated in Romania – participants will engage in hands-on activities and discussions highlighting best practices in civic engagement, empowerment, and social inclusion.
 16:00 – 16:45: Brief evaluation
 19:00 – 20:00 Social Dinner

October 29, 2025 Institutions and Community

09:00 – 10:00 Breakfast
 10:00 – 10:40 Site Visit to Craiova City Hall
 Discussion on the role of local administration in developing inclusion policies and support for diverse communities.
 10:50 – 11:20 Social Assistance Directorate
 Overview of social and support programs for vulnerable groups, including migrants and refugees.
 Speaker: Ionel Cosmin Gagiu, PhD, General Director, Social Assistance Directorate of the Municipality of Craiova
 11:30 – 12:00 Site Visit to "Elena Cuza" National College
 Education as a tool for civic formation and awareness of cultural diversity values.
 Reflecting the EmpowerEngage Lab principles, this visit shows how educational institutions contribute to advocacy and community engagement.
 13:00 – 14:00 Lunch
 14:30 – 15:15 Site Visit to Craiova Art Museum
 The visit to the Craiova Art Museum explores culture as a common language that fosters intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding, emphasizing the role of art as a transnational medium that reflects the dynamics of migration while promoting solidarity, social cohesion, and a shared commitment to European values.
 15:15 – 16:00 Final discussions, conclusions, and awarding of certificates of attendance
 Synthesis of the three CISOMO II pillars – integration, civic engagement, and solidarity – within the Craiova experience. Participants reflect on how the EmpowerEngage Lab principles have been applied throughout the event and how they can be transferred to their own contexts.
 19:00 – 20:00 Social Dinner

October 30, 2025 – Discovering Craiova

09:00 – 10:00 Breakfast
 10:00 – 13:00 Tour of Craiova's Historic Center
 Discovering local heritage as an expression of cultural diversity and European openness.
 13:00 – 14:00 Lunch and Official Closing of the Event

Dissemination Activities

The CISOMO II study visit in Craiova, Romania, held from 27 to 30 October 2025, involved representatives of partner institutions, NGOs, trainers 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 migrant integration, civic engagement and social solidarity.

A project poster and banner were displayed throughout the event to ensure clear visibility for participants. An information panel presenting the CISOMO II project is also permanently placed in the entrance hall of the "Alexandru and Aristia Aman" County Library, allowing visitors to learn about the aims and ongoing work of the project.

The project is further disseminated on the website of Asociația de Studii Socio-Economice, where photographs and a description of the Craiova study visit are available at <https://asse.rotind.ro/en/2025/01/civil-society-solidarity-movement-ii/>

Regional media published two articles in Jurnalul Olteniei: one on 19 March 2025 <https://jurnalulolteniei.ro/2025/03/19/miscarea-de-solidaritate-a-societatii-civile-ii-o-initiativa-europeana-pentru-promovarea-solidaritatiei-fata-de-migratie-si-valorile-fundamentale/>,

providing general information about the project and a second article dedicated to the Craiova study visit <https://jurnalulolteniei.ro/2025/10/31/asociatia-de-studii-socio-economice-promoveaza-la-craiova-valorile-solidaritatiei-diversitatii-si-implicarii-civice-in-proiectul-cisomo-ii/>

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

The event was co-funded by the European Union and hosted as part of the CISOMO II 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.

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