



# ECAS Activity Report 2014



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### Your Europe Advice



Group picture during the seminar of the 9 & 10 December 2014

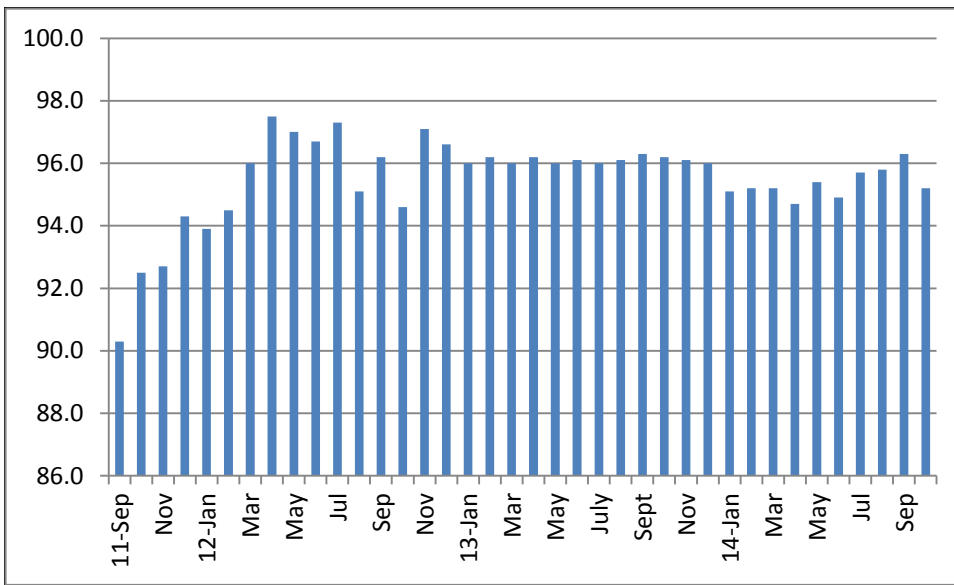
### Performance in 2014

In 2014, the YEA legal experts replied to **20 245 enquiries**.

Over the current contract (July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011 - present), the Service run by ECAS has successfully managed a 77% increase in the volume of inquiries. The quality of the service has been maintained at a high level despite this large increase.

The introduction of the nine criteria in 2011 led to an improvement in quality in the first year of the contract. It helped ECAS provide targeted feedback to the Experts on specific aspects of the reply requiring improvement.

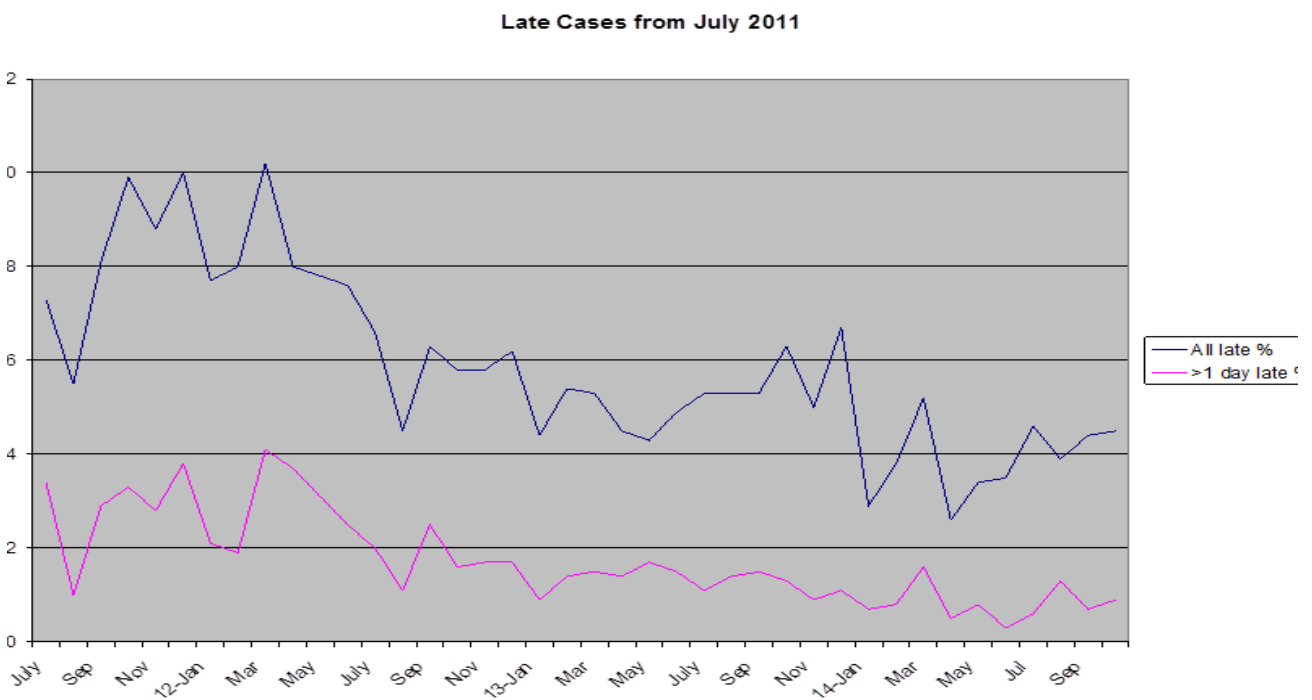
The charts below, which summarise the results of our examination of monthly random samples of 120 cases according to nine criteria, show that we have maintained a high quality in our replies.



Sources: YEA Monthly report

ECAS has succeeded in constantly reducing the response time of replies throughout the period of the contract.

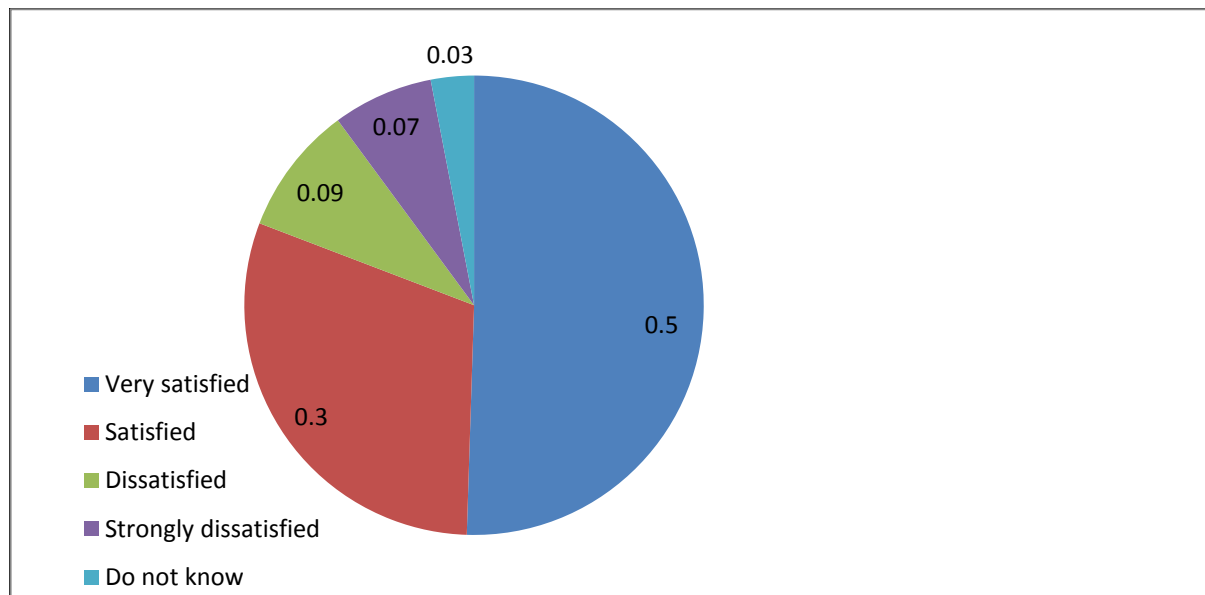
Figure 2: Decrease of late cases from July 2011 till November 2014



Sources: YEA Monthly report

The Evaluation of the Your Europe Advice service, commissioned by DG MARKT and undertaken by ICF GHK over the period August 2013 to March 2014, showed that the YEA service meets the needs of a large majority of its current users. It concluded that ***“YEA provides a service that is fast, of high quality and offers advice that empowers its users”***.

Figure 3: YEA survey respondents' satisfaction



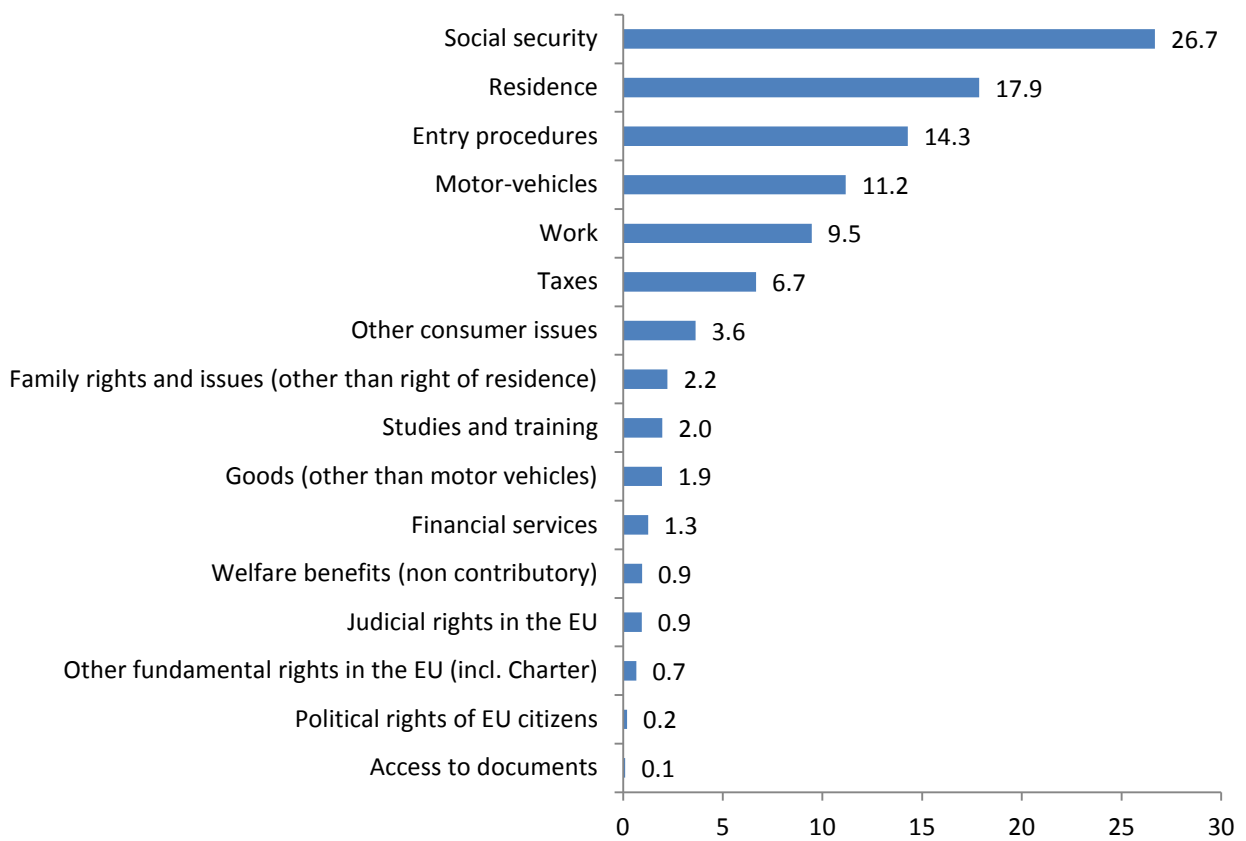
Sources: YEA online survey (n=885)

### Nature of the Enquiries

For more than a year, the proportion of purely informative questions has been reducing and the proportion of those reflecting real problems has been increasing. This is true for all of the topics and all categories of citizens. Citizens face obstacles not only from national administrations but also from private entities. A certain proportion of citizens are well informed but unable to find any remedy to their situations.

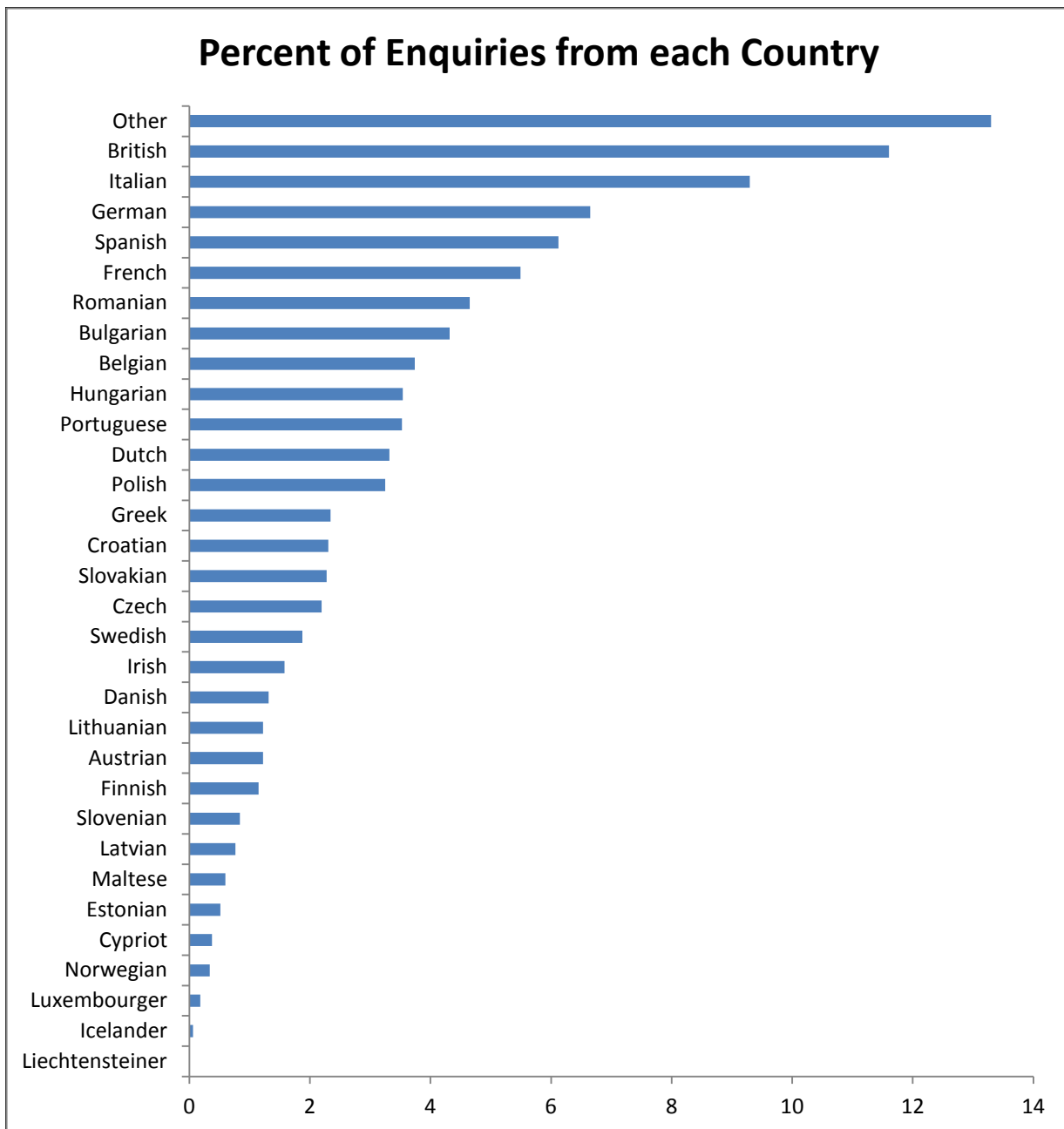
The received enquiries covered the following topics:

## Percent of Enquiries for each Topic



Social security has always been the largest topic, however in 2014 the proportion was even higher than in the past. In these times of financial crisis, social security touches upon health and financial concerns that are perceived as crucial by citizens. The residence right is the second largest topic. As Directive 2004/38 guarantees rights that are intimately connected to the concept of citizenship of the EU, it raises crucial questions about mobility. Because of the way that this directive was implemented some citizens are not able to enjoy their right of free movement. The statistics show that cases relating to motor vehicles, entry procedures and taxes account for proportionately more interesting cases than a couple of years ago.

The enquiries received are from all 28 EU countries, as well as from Norwegian, Icelandic, and third country nationals:



## Outreach Activities

The majority of the experts have expressed an interest in participating in Outreach activities and in the promotion of the Your Europe Advice service.

Between January and December 2014, 17 Your Europe Advice experts participated in 35 outreach activities covering the following countries: Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and the United Kingdom. The number of participants varied significantly according to the type of the event, but based on the feedback reports the number of persons reached may be over 3,500. The events can be divided into 3 categories: network meetings, general public events and consultation days.

The network meetings were generally organised by the Commission Representations and gathered a large number of representatives from various service networks such as SOLVIT, Europe Direct, Team Europe, Eurodes, Enterprise Europe Network, consumer organisations, etc. The YEA experts



met the two main objectives, namely presenting and explaining the Your Europe website and Your Europe Advice to potential multipliers and “institutional” users and liaising with representatives from other networks that provide help and advice to citizens and businesses.

Most of the general public events took the form of public fairs. In most cases the YEA expert shared a stand with the Commission representation and provided information about YE and YEA. They often gave short presentations and sometimes provided face-to-face advice to visitors.

Consultation days took place at the Dublin and Prague Commission Representations. During these consultation days the experts provided face-to-face advice to EU citizens on their free movement rights. Citizens had the opportunity to present documents to the Legal Expert to clarify their case.

## **EU Legal Updates**

The Management Team ensures that the experts are kept up-to-date with new legislation and case-law. The experts were provided with a monthly newsletter entitled “EU Law Update”. This newsletter is tailored to the continuously evolving information needs of the experts. It includes the latest news from the EU, information on recent infringement procedures undertaken by the European Commission and an analysis of the latest Court of Justice cases related to areas dealt with by experts in their enquiries. Each month, by way of example, the newsletter also publishes one or more of the experts’ enquiries judged to be either good or interesting. Outreach activities, interesting web-sites, developments in individual member states and references to academic EU articles which may be relevant for the experts are also included in this newsletter.

## **Feedback Reports**

At the request of the European Commission, and in accordance with the directions of the Commission, ECAS provided four feedback reports to the Commission. These reports included details of the cases handled by the experts in Your Europe Advice and also a policy analysis of the topics covered in the enquiries.

## **Your Europe Web Portal Assistance**

The Your Europe Portal is an EU website designed to provide comprehensive first-stop information and signposting to assist citizens and businesses in understanding, exercising and enforcing their rights and entitlements throughout the European Union under EU law. At the request of the European Commission, or occasionally on its own initiative, but always with the prior approval of the Commission, ECAS submitted updates to the Your Europe Portal to ensure the ongoing accuracy, completeness and quality of information on the portal. In 2014, ECAS’ contribution to the Your Europe web Portal consisted mainly of:

- Revision and updates of the FAQ on Travel, Cars Registration and Driving License, Goods, Services and Capital, Consumers, Residence, Education and Health issues;
- Updates of the Vehicles section;
- Creation of factsheets on the travel documents for minors, and the rules on expired or lost passport;

- Input on Registration of cars for students.

### **YEA training seminars**

In cooperation with the European Commission, ECAS organises a training seminar once a year. Training topics are proposed to the Commission by the Management Team after consultation with the experts, taking into account difficult enquiries which have been identified by quality control together with trends and problems presented in the feedback reports and issues arising from Outreach activities. In cooperation with the European Commission, the topics are delivered and discussed during the training seminar by specialists in these areas from the European Commission. Exceptionally this year, two training seminars were organised. The first one took place on 20 and 21 February 2014 (52 YEA legal experts were present) and the second on 9 and 10 December 2014 (46 YEA legal experts were present).

### **Your Europe Chat on EU Residence Rights**

For the first time, the YEA experts took active part in an online chat hosted on the Your Europe Facebook page. In November, five YEA experts provided replies online to 140 questions on residence rights.

## **EU Rights Clinic**

In 2014 the EU Rights Clinic continued its activity of providing problem-solving of difficult cases involving migrants and advocating for the implementation of concrete and adequate measures at both the EU level and in member states to overcome the visible and hidden barriers to European citizenship.

Cases handled: 64 (updated to October 2014)

Cases closed : 55

Cases open : 8

Referred cases (YEA or other advice services): 46

The EU Rights Clinic presented a petition in front of the Committee on Petitions of the European Parliament to argue for EU action in the case of the Spanish overseas assets declaration law on 11th of November 2014. The Spanish law as it stands breaches the free movement of capital in the EU.

For more details on the case, please read the [Notice to the European Parliament's members](#) and the [agenda](#).

### **Right to Move Campaign**

Based on this experience and considering the deteriorating framework of free movement rights' enforcement lately as well as the populist rhetoric on the issue of some politicians in certain

member states, the EU Rights Clinic and ECAS launched the [Right to Move](#) campaign based on 7 Strategies to support free movement in the EU.

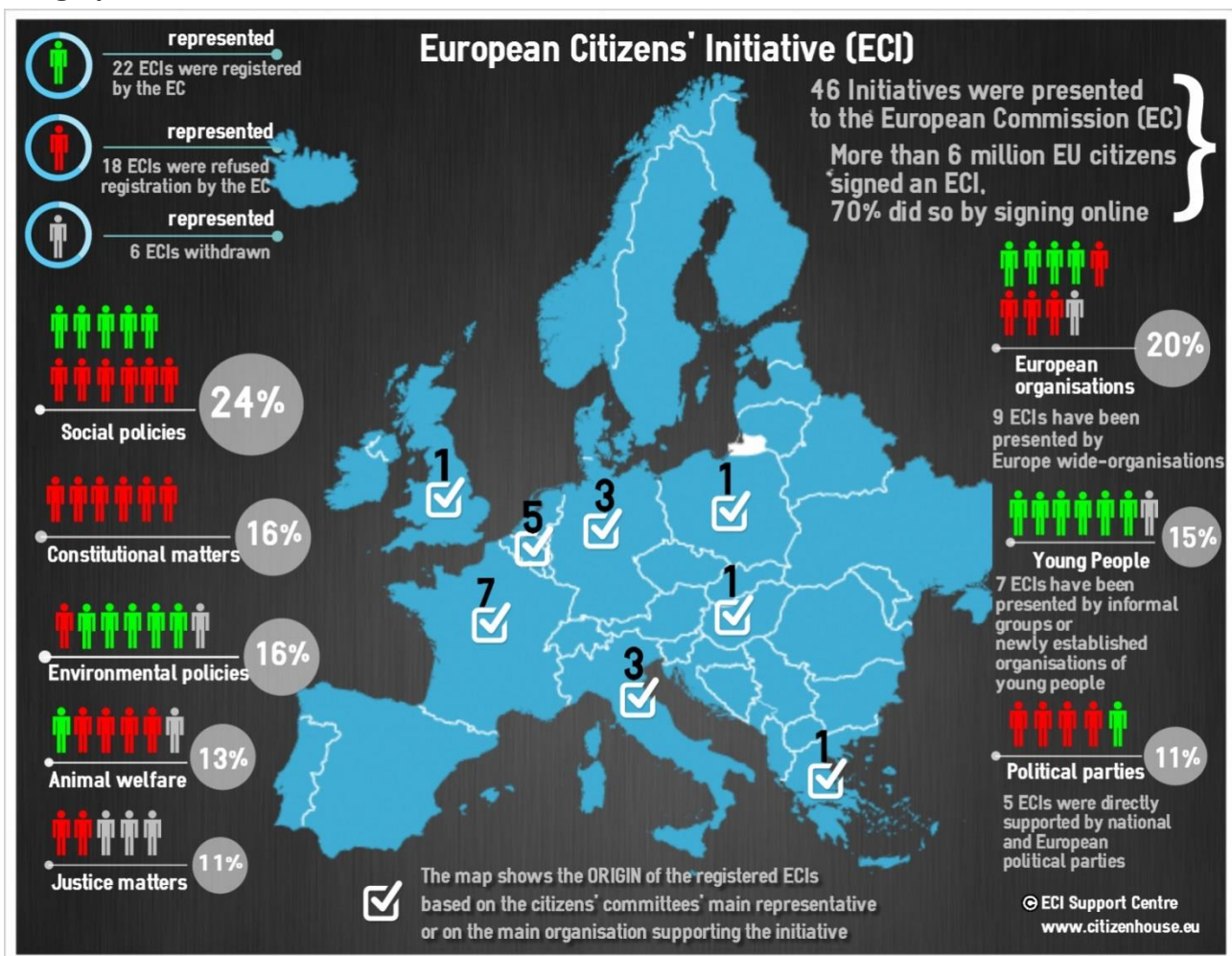
## ECI Support Centre

### Advice and Information

The ECI Support Centre is a joint initiative of the European Citizen Action Service, Democracy International and Initiative and Referendum Institute Europe. The ECI Support Centre is a not-for-profit service, whose purpose is to provide advice and information to ECI organisers before and during the process of launching and implementing an ECI.

In 2014, the collaboration between Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer LLP ECAS was enhanced. Freshfields and ECAS in fact signed a letter of engagement under the framework of the ECI Support Centre, stating that Freshfields will assist ECAS in the formulation of ECIs with a view to their correct registration with the European Commission. Under the framework of this collaboration, one initiative has already been advised and more are due to be advised in 2015.

### Infographic



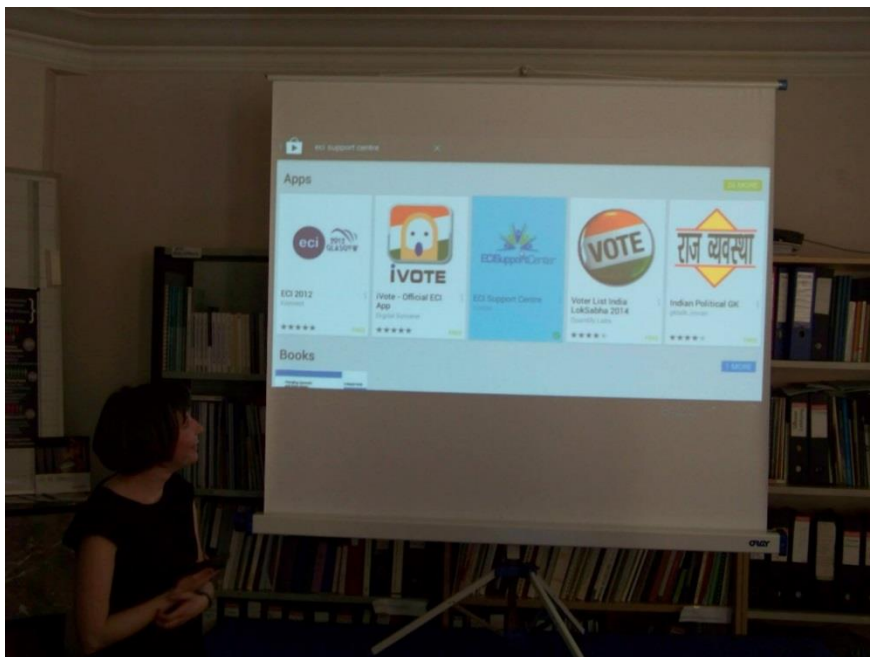
**ECI Watch newsletter: bimonthly newsletter on the European Citizen's Initiative (ECI) sent to 1500 subscribers**

ECI Watch editions available here :

- [February 2014](#)
- [May 2014](#)
- [June 2014](#)
- [October 2014](#)
- [December 2014](#)

### **First ECI Mobile application**

On the 14<sup>th</sup> of April, The ECI Support Centre launched the 1st mobile application for ECIs, allowing you to: Check up on different European Citizens' Initiatives (ECIs), sign ECIs directly through your mobile and receive updates on everything related to ECIs.



The aim is to raise awareness about ECIs by allowing citizens to sign them directly on their mobile phones. A fundraising campaign was launched to increase the usability of the tool, which will lead in 2015 to the creation of a new ECISC responsive website integrating the features of the application launched in 2014.

Participants: 30 in the launch event.



## **ECI DAY 2014: Building up success**

15.04.2014, Brussels

Two years after the launch of the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) and one year before the revision of the implementing regulation 211/2011, the ECI Day 2014 created an excellent opportunity to look into the first successful and complete ECI processes, to discuss the best practices and to set up a list of recommendations that can raise the efficiency of this direct democracy instrument and make it more citizens friendly.

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) in partnership with the Committee of the Regions (CoR), the European Citizen Action Service (ECAS), Democracy International, the Initiative and Referendum Institute Europe, The ECI Campaign, EurActiv and Euronews, organised the conference.

Participants: 100

<http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.events-and-activities-eci-day-2014-photos>

<http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.videos.32071>

[http://www.eesc.europa.eu/resources/docs/eci-day\\_report.pdf](http://www.eesc.europa.eu/resources/docs/eci-day_report.pdf)

### **ECI Knowledge Centre**

ECAS has created a Knowledge Centre in collaboration with the US Foundation Centre, on two different topics: EU Migration and the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI).

The ECAS Knowledge Centre on the ECI is an online collection of more than 200 resources on the world's first transnational participatory tool, which enables one million European citizens to ask the European Commission to propose legislation in an area in which the EU has competence.

The Knowledge Centre aims to assist civil society campaigners, researchers, analysts, academics, advisors, policy makers and interested citizens navigate through the large amount of information available in a user-friendly manner. At present, the Knowledge Centre on the ECI offers easy access to original research, case studies, evaluations, papers, issue briefs, toolkits and so forth. Other topics related to Civic Engagement in the EU will be gradually added over time.

<http://www.ecas.org/civic-engagement/knowledge-centre/>

### Guide to EU Funding

The Guide is published on an annual basis and offers an overview of the main programmes and sources of funding in the EU.

The 2014 Guide was published in April 2014 and was saved on USB keys and offered to all 145 ECAS members as part of the membership package. 57 copies of the Guide were also sold to interested individuals and libraries.

The 2015 edition of the Guide will exhibit continuity with the previous edition, but will include new features, especially regarding the layout. It will be published as an e-book which will be made available to members in the online members-only-area and to other individuals interested in purchasing it through a protected hyperlink.

### Monthly Funding Alerts

This service has been packaged and offered as a separate service to ECAS members since October 2014.

The layout has been revised, taking into account the suggestions and remarks made by ECAS members in the customer service surveys launched in early September 2014. The calls are now classified by policy area to facilitate navigation and allow members to spot the relevant calls for their needs quicker (*figure 3*). It also includes a notice section with InfoDays organized by the European Commission, as well as information on opportunities for joining partnerships that ECAS has received.

From January 2015 both the funding alerts and the newsletters will be uploaded in the members-only-area on the ECAS website.

Figure 3

**(Month) EU Funding Alert**

User instructions:

1. Please click on the headings below for a **short summary** of the calls per policy area. You will get information about the objectives, priorities, financed actions, eligibility criteria and financial allocation of each call
2. Please click on the links displayed at the bottom of each call for further information about the call and the contact person
3. We recommend you to check out our **Funding Guide**, which takes the form of an e-Book, to learn more about EU funding opportunities and tips to submit successful grant proposals

Download the ORDER FORM [here](#) and send it to [publication@ecas.org](mailto:publication@ecas.org)  
Order your copy now either with PAYPAL or by credit card!

Development, Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid

Education, Training and Youth

Employment, Innovation, Social Affairs and Inclusion

Enlargement and Neighbourhood

Environment, Climate Action and Energy

Agriculture and Rural Development

Health and Consumer Protection

Democracy, Citizenship and Transparency

Justice, Human Rights and Migration

**Any questions...?**

Send your enquiries to our [Services Manager](#) and get a timely and individual response to your questions!

## ECAS' Monthly Newsletter

The outline of the Newsletter was reviewed in September 2014, based on a customer service survey sent out to ECAS members in early September. It now includes, in addition to the other sections, a **new section specially devoted to our membership** ('Members' Story of the Month'), a section to promote ECAS' activity on Twitter and a new layout, more visually appealing and reader-friendly (*figure 1*).

The new section is devoted to **promoting members' activities and events** which are worth sharing and can be of interest to other recipients. So far we have been receiving between 1 and 4 contributions per issue.

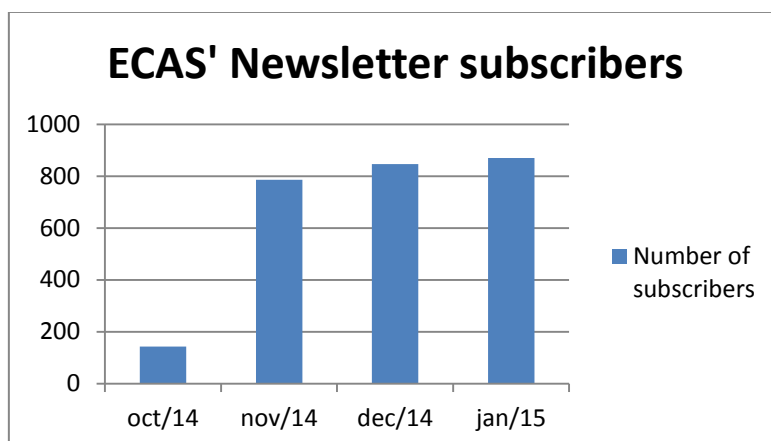
The target audience has been expanded to include representatives from the various EU institutions (in particular the Commission and the Parliament), partners and other bodies and networks based in Brussels working in our main fields of interest (**870 recipients** as of 09/01/2015, a number which will gradually expand). Until September 2014 the Newsletter was a service especially offered to our members and they were the only recipients (*figure 2*).

An effort has been made as well to promote the Newsletter and attract new subscribers, by advertising it on social networks (i.e. ECAS website, Facebook and Twitter).

Figure 1



Figure 2



## AWARENESS RAISING/CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES

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### ECAS 2.0 Strategy

The “ECAS 2.0” outreach and communication agenda introduced social media monitoring, a new ECAS website on an open source platform, an updated ECAS e-mailing system and promotional tools.

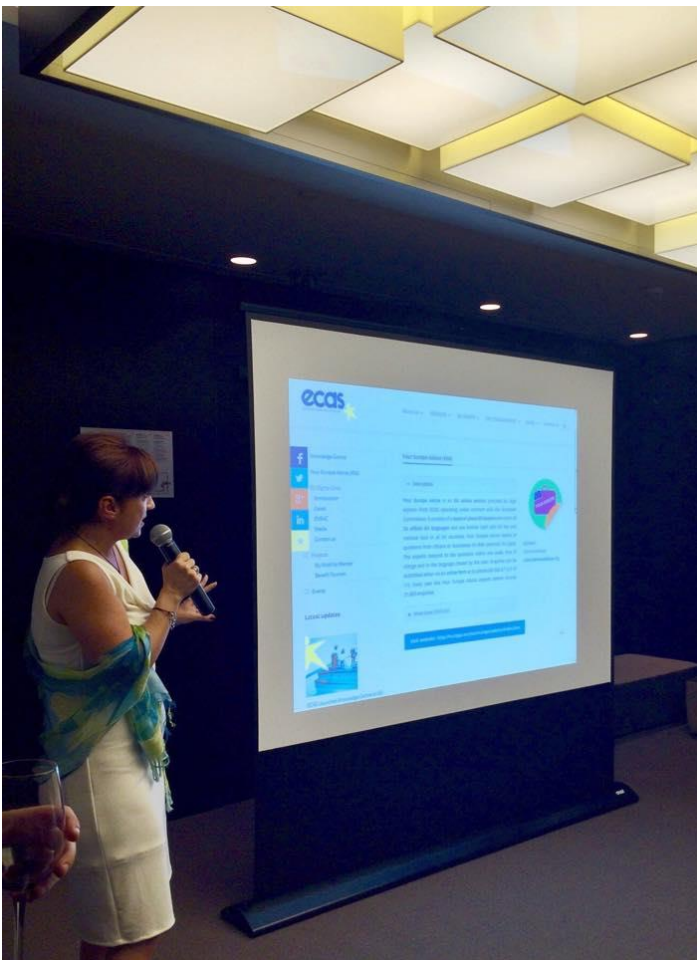
Impact: Increased ECAS outreach towards its constituencies through maximizing the use of new technologies and new media in order to encourage the effective transfer and exchange of information.

### ECAS' New Web Site

On the 30th of September, ECAS officially launched its [new website](#) with a brand new graphic image. The new website reflects ECAS' mid-term strategy and aims to reach out to citizens and CSOs through the use of new technologies and social media.

60 stakeholders and partners participated in the launch in which a presentation of the new graphic image and digital strategy of ECAS was made.





Data from Google Analytics: from 1<sup>st</sup> of September to 31<sup>st</sup> of December

Users : 20,845

Pageviews : 51,723

Avg. Session Duration: 00:01:29

Pageviews: 51,723

Visitors per country:

1. Belgium 4,689
2. Italy 3,412
3. Turkey 2,520

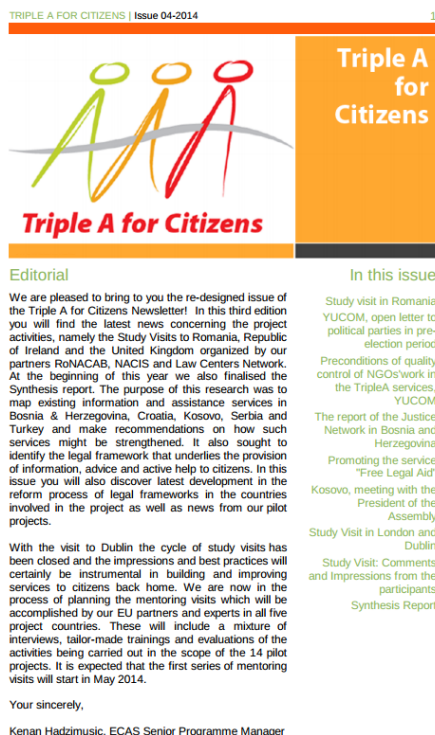
## Knowledge Centre on EU Migration

ECAS launched the Knowledge Center on EU Rights and Civic Participation which has been developed in collaboration with the US Foundation Centre. The Knowledge Center offers an online collection of more than 400 online resources, articles, research papers, evaluations and toolkits on two main research fields: the European Citizens' Initiative and EU Migration.

The Knowledge Center is accessible to both citizens and practitioners and it helps citizens and civil society organizations more easily navigate through the large amount of information available.

<http://www.ecas.org/eu-rights/knowledge-centre/>

## Triple A Quarterly Newsletter



In 2014 three issues of the Triple A newsletter were released (April, July and November). Each issue presented updated news concerning the project activities as well as the latest developments in the reform process of the legal framework in Western Balkans and Turkey.

Number of recipients: 200

Newsletter 3, April 2014:

[http://tripleacitizens.eu/app/uploads/publications/Newsletter\\_Issue\\_3\\_April\\_2014.pdf](http://tripleacitizens.eu/app/uploads/publications/Newsletter_Issue_3_April_2014.pdf)

Newsletter 4, July 2014:

[http://tripleacitizens.eu/app/uploads/publications/Newsletter\\_Issue\\_4\\_July\\_2014.pdf](http://tripleacitizens.eu/app/uploads/publications/Newsletter_Issue_4_July_2014.pdf)

Newsletter 5, November 2014:

## Training to Members of the Social Platform on European Citizens' Initiatives

On 25/03/2014, ECAS delivered a training to 15 members of the Social Platform on ECIs in order to raise awareness and spread knowledge about ECIs.

## Study Visit to London and Dublin

“Triple A for Citizens” project

From the 3rd to the 8th of March 2014, representatives of partner and pilot project organisations travelled to London and Dublin in order to exchange experiences and best practices in the area of legal advice and active assistance to citizens. These events were organized by the Law Centres Network in the UK, and the National Association of Citizen Information Services in Ireland.

In London, the participants had the opportunity to visit six non-governmental organizations that provide citizens with different types of information and advice, the municipality of Croydon and the Upper House of Parliament.

In Dublin, the participants explored different models of citizens' advice, information and



assistance in the framework of the National Association of Citizens information Service. During the two days, representatives of the Association illustrated different service delivery models, methods of collecting, storing and processing data, training of staff and volunteers and evaluation of their work. In addition, the visit integrated presentations from Dublin City Centre, CIS, CIB and the

Free Legal Advice Centre (FLAC) as well as from the Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS).

Number of participants: 24

**Article on the Website:** [http://triplecitizens.eu/index.php/pages/news\\_details/85](http://triplecitizens.eu/index.php/pages/news_details/85)

**Comments from the participants:** [http://triplecitizens.eu/index.php/pages/news\\_details/86](http://triplecitizens.eu/index.php/pages/news_details/86)

## “My Mobility Mentor” Web Hub

The My Mobility Mentor web hub ([mymobilitymentor.ning.com](http://mymobilitymentor.ning.com)) provides practical information on working abroad including practical guides on EU rights and how to enforce them in the UK, Italy and Belgium; links to useful sources of information and advice at EU and national level; and links to assistance networks, such as EURES, Your Europe Advice and SOLVIT as well to local means of redress (covering rights in Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Ireland, Italy, Romania, UK). The web hub has over 20 active members and it is regularly updated with content relevant both to partners and potential migrants in English, French, Dutch, Italian, Romanian and Bulgarian. It has 20 active members.

## Practical Guides in 6 Languages for Working Abroad

ECAS developed practical guides with tips on living and working in Belgium, Italy and the UK. The guide is divided into three sections (before arrival, after arrival and what to do if things go wrong) and provides an overview of free movement rights and related matters both in general and specifically regarding Belgium, Italy and the UK. The practical guide is available online in English, Bulgarian, French, Dutch, Romanian and Italian language versions. 400 paper copies were given to Bulgarian and Romanian citizens at the pre-departure meetings.



## Invisible EU Migrants: Training on EU advocacy and Rights of Vulnerable EU migrants

8 – 9 May 2014, Brussels

ECAS organised a one-day training session for NGOs working with EU migrants in Brussels which was followed by a round table event. The 40 participants received an overview of EU law on residence rights and rights to claim benefits, EU Advocacy Techniques, key issues in Belgium, case studies on strategic litigation and targeting the Commission and infringement proceedings. The events are part of the project, “The Invisible EU Migrants”, led by the AIRE Centre and funded by the European Program for Integration and Migration, which aims to encourage EU institutions to take action to secure the EU legal rights of vulnerable and marginalized Union citizens.

## Study Visit of Croatian NGOs in Brussels

IMPACT Office, 6-9 October 2014

During the Study Visit, the participants had the opportunity to get acquainted with the financing opportunities at European level and social development programmes thanks to a training delivered by Ms. Marta Pont, ECAS' Services and Training Manager. They took part in several workshops organized in the scope of the *Open Days 2014 - European Week of Regions and Cities* in a half-day visit of different projects implemented in the framework of the [Sustainable District Contract](#) in Brussels with Mr. Sebastien Sainsard, Project Manager of *Contrat de Quartier Durable Bockstael*.

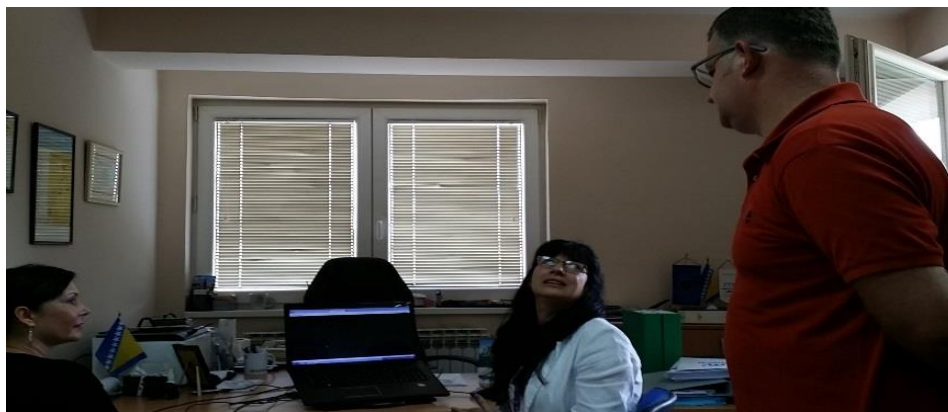
**Number of participants:** 7

**Agenda of the event:** <https://www.dropbox.com/home/docs%20for%20website>

## Mentoring visits in Turkey and Western Balkans

Triple A Project, May 2014 - October 2014

The Management staff of a total of 14 organizations implementing pilot projects were mentored by the LCN (UK), NACIS (Ireland) and RoNACAB (Romania) from May till October 2014. The



mentorship was reinforced by the two ECAS consultants, Antony Valcke (Serbia and Turkey) and Ernesto Razzano (Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo). The implementers of the

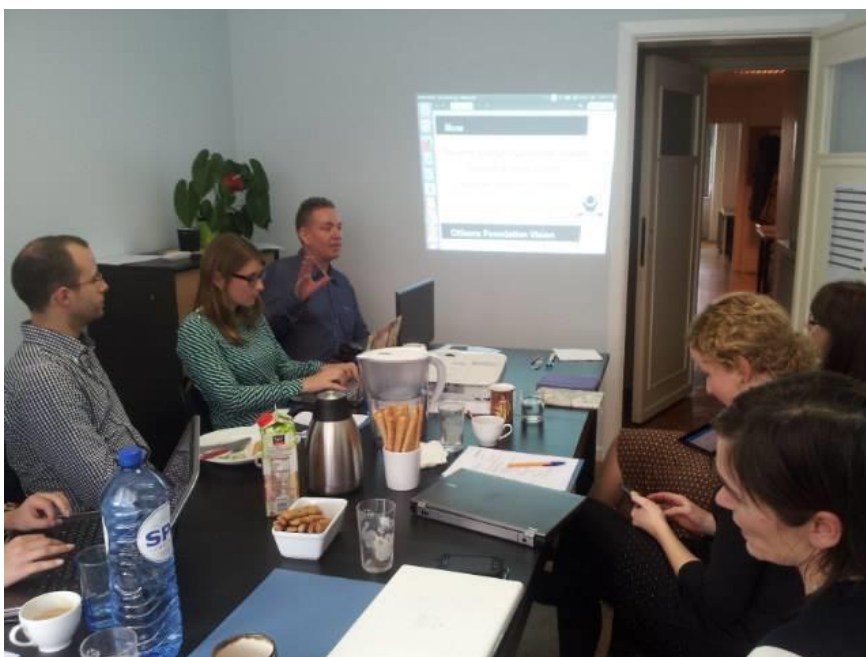
pilot projects provided input into the *outputs and outcomes tables* as well as the *work plans* which served as a basis for the mentoring. Based on these, the mentors evaluated the progress of the projects and examined the internal functioning of the organisations. During the visits, special attention was given to the national legal environment, recording systems used by the organizations and the way data collected from direct provision of information, advice or legal aid was used for advocacy activities. In addition, the mentors examined the readiness of the pilots to join the Triple A network and provided on the spot training on themes of interest to the beneficiaries. Both the partner organizations and the ECAS consultants produced mentoring reports summarizing the main findings. The reports, which formulate clear recommendations for their future work, will be sent to the monitored organizations.

## Brainstorming on Crowdsourcing Legislation at EU level

6 November, Brussels

The aim of the meeting was to share best-practices and national experiences on crowdsourcing legislation with national partners and to discuss the feasibility of introducing co-legislation at EU level. A follow up meeting was planned in 2015.

Partners present: Elisar Bashir (MoveBG), Bastien Jaillot (Democratie Ouverte), Robert Bjarnason (Citizens Foundation), Maarja Toots (OpenEstonia), Yvette Jeuken (NL).



## RESEARCH/ANALYSIS

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### Study “Fiscal Impact of EU Migrants in Austria, Germany, the Netherlands and the UK”

In response to the claims from four Member States that EU migrants were a burden on their national social security systems, ECAS empirically examined the presence or absence of “benefit tourism” in Austria, Germany, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. ECAS discovered that in all four of the focal nations EU migrants made positive contributions to the state budgets during the 2007 – 2013 period.

Additionally, total taxes paid by EU migrants exceeded the total benefits they received by between 0.2 and 0.9% of GDP, depending on the country. Even when excluding pension-related benefits and contributions, the net positive contribution remains for Austria, Germany and the UK. Only with the Netherlands does this balance turn slightly negative.



According to ECAS research team “EU migrants receive on average 50% less in terms of social benefit expenditures than the average citizen of the four host countries. If old-age pension contributions are not taken into account, EU migrants still receive between 14% and 31% less than the average citizen.”

The outcomes of the study were presented and discussed at a conference on “Free Movement in the EU Today: Challenges and Opportunities” in the European Parliament on the 12<sup>th</sup> of November 2014 by members of the European People’s Party, the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe, the Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy Party and the Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament.

The research was funded by the EPIM

(European Program for Integration and Migration).

[http://www.ecas.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Fiscal-Impact-of-EU-Migrants-in-Austria-Germay-the-Netherlands-and-the-UK\\_ECAS-2.pdf](http://www.ecas.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Fiscal-Impact-of-EU-Migrants-in-Austria-Germay-the-Netherlands-and-the-UK_ECAS-2.pdf)

### Study “The European Citizens’ Initiative Registration: Falling at the First Hurdle?”

This study has been conducted by ECAS within the framework of the ECI Support Centre with the kind assistance of Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer LLP.

The study aims to promote a better understanding of the ECI Regulation, particularly on the registration procedures for a proposed initiative. It suggests a number of recommendations to be discussed when the review of the Regulation takes place based on an analysis of the "subject matters" of the ECIs that have been refused registration by the Commission.

[http://www.ecas.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/ECI-report\\_ECAS-2014\\_1.pdf](http://www.ecas.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/ECI-report_ECAS-2014_1.pdf)



### Right to Move Campaign

[www.righttomove.eu](http://www.righttomove.eu)

ECAS and the EU Rights Clinic launched the Right to Move campaign, which is comprised of Seven Strategies to improve the Free Movement of Persons in the EU. One strategy was released every Wednesday for seven weeks on the campaign website, [www.righttomove.eu](http://www.righttomove.eu).

This campaign is in response to the recent and unprecedented governmental calls for restrictions on the free movement of people in the EU. The free movement of persons is one of the cornerstones of the EU's Single Market and is a right deeply cherished by citizens in Europe today.

More than 30 organisations supported the campaign and 50 individuals endorsed it. The seven strategies were discussed with DG Justice and MEPs.

### Free Movement in the EU Today: Challenges and Opportunities,

12.11.2014, Workshop in the European Parliament

The [Right to Move](#) campaign is based on 7 Strategies to support free movement in the EU and the findings of ECAS' [Study on the Fiscal Impact](#) of EU migration in the UK, Netherlands, Germany and Austria. These findings were presented and discussed with representatives of the main political parties: Ms. Jean Lambert, Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance; Ms. Danuta Jazlowiecka, MEP, Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats); Ms. Cecilia Wikstrom, MEP, Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe; Ms. Laura Ferrara, MEP, Europe of freedom and direct democracy Group; Ms. Brigit Sippel, MEP, Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament); and other stakeholders.

There have been three main outcomes from this debate:

1. A suggestion to extend the Study to all EU MS and in particular Belgium, Denmark and Poland.
2. A proposal for the formation of a cross-party Task Force in the European Parliament to monitor closely the developments with regard to free movement and to play a pro-active role in "leading the opinion by facts and figures" (MEP Cecilia Wikstrom).
3. ECAS to launch a forum to facilitate brainstorming on messages for combating populist statements and counterbalance anti-free movement rhetoric based on facts as "information is the best defense against fear" (MEP Danuta Jazlowiecka).



For more information on the event: <http://www.ecas.org/press-release-members-european-parliament-support-creation-task-force-monitor-free-movement-eu/>



Participants: 50



## ECI Legal Framework: Need for Reform?

10.12.2014, Conference in the EESC, Brussels

On 10 December, the European Citizen Action Service, together with the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), organised a Conference at the EESC's premises on the reform of the Legal Framework for the European Citizens's Initiative (ECI).

During the Conference, the findings and recommendations of a study recently undertaken by ECAS and the Law firm, Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer, on the legal basis of the refused ECIs were presented and discussed. This Study, entitled "[The European Citizens' Initiative Registration: Falling at the First Hurdle?](#)" provides a detailed legal analysis of the grounds on which the European Commission decided whether to register or reject the proposed ECIs submitted before 1st of July 2014.

Impact: Raising awareness about the legal framework of the ECI for ECI organisers and stakeholders.

Conclusions of the event: The right of initiative of the EC should be preserved while enhancing the accountability of the Commission towards the EP on ECIs. There is a need for an enhanced debate on the nature of the ECI and its institutional framework. More advice and support is needed for ECI organisers on the legal basis. The European Parliament needs to play a more active role and provide the opportunity for ECIs organisers to present their initiatives to the Committee on Petitions additionally.

Participants: 85

More information: <http://www.ecas.org/summary-conference-eci-legal-framework-need-reform/>



## Europe +

ECAS is actively participating in the Steering committee and the activities of the Europe + (Civil Society for the Renewal of European Democracy) alliance initiated by the European Movement International which brings together over 40 organisations from civil society calling for renewed and better functioning democracy in the EU.

### EESC Civil Society Liaison group

In 2014 ECAS applied and was accepted as a member of the EESC Liaison Group with European Civil Society Organisations and Networks, representing the sector of European citizenship.

### Structured Dialogues

ECAS applied and was selected for membership of the Structured Dialogue with European Structural and Investment Funds' partners group of experts (ESIF SD).

ECAS is a member of the Structured Dialogue with civil society under the Europe for Citizen Program.

## PUBLIC EVENTS

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### From Rights to Tools: for Increased Citizen Participation in the EU

29.04.2014 Brussels based Conference with Romanian and Hungarian participants

On 29<sup>th</sup> of April, a 'World Café' roundtable event was held at the Social Platform in Brussels under the framework of the European Participation Initiatives for Citizens (EPIC) project. The EPIC project, run by the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux (NACAB) in partnership with ECAS and the Civil College Foundation (CFF) Hungary aims to enhance citizens' ownership and usage of their rights by promoting and increasing knowledge levels on four EU-level participation tools: European elections, petitioning to the European Parliament, complaining to the European Ombudsman, and the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI).

The World Café event gathered 30 participants who discussed the methods of citizen participation in the EU and how to encourage their wider use.



## Support to Citizens and Citizen Engagement - Current EU Practices

26 - 27 May 2014, International Conference, IMPACT Center, Zadar, Croatia



During this two-day conference, the participants had the opportunity to focus on instruments of citizen engagement and support mechanisms at different levels: national, regional and European. The conference was attended by local actors implementing participatory projects, representatives of Croatian government and providers of information, advice and legal aid to citizens.

The first day of the conference was dedicated to mechanisms of citizen participation at European and national level. In the morning, the *Europe for Citizens Programme*, the *European Citizen Initiative (ECI)* and *Your Europe Advice (YEA)* were presented. In the afternoon, the panel focused more on national perspectives, presenting the past and current citizens' initiatives in Croatia such as the *Good Initiative*.

On the second day, the mechanisms of participation at regional level were explored and, thanks to the presence of regional partners of the *Triple A for Citizens* project, the state of play of citizen information, advice and active help services in the SEE countries was also discussed.

The conference ended with a debate on the implementation and limitations of the legal framework for citizen participation and engagement in Croatia.

Number of participants: 80

**Agenda of the event:** [http://triplecitizens.eu/app/uploads/publications/Conference\\_Programme-IMPACT.pdf](http://triplecitizens.eu/app/uploads/publications/Conference_Programme-IMPACT.pdf)

## Civil Society Reclaiming Europe: From EU Policy Beneficiary to EU Policy Actor

18.06.2014, International Conference ,Bucharest, organised by NACAB, Romania in the framework of the EPIC project



Following the world cafe format, the conference participants discussed the perceived distance between the EU and the civil society from the Member States. They reflected on the role that civil society plays in EU policy making, while acting as a link between the European and the national level.



## The Europeanisation of Everyday Life: Cross-Border Practices and Transnational Identities among EU and Third-Country Citizens

25.06.2014, Conference in Brussels

ECAS hosted the conference in partnership with EUCROSS in order to present the findings of the EUCROSS project which examined the relationship between the various activities of EU residents (nationals, mobile EU citizens, and third-country nationals) across the borders of nation states and their collective identities. Various professors and researchers from all over Europe presented the findings of a total of 8 papers.

Participants: 55



## Summer University Hungary

11.07.2014, organised by the [Civil College Foundation](#)

The annual [Citizens Participation Summer School](#), which was organised by the [Civil College Foundation](#), the [CEE Citizens Network](#), the [European Community Development Network](#), the [European Community Organizing Network](#) and the European Citizen Action Service, took place in Kunbábony, Hungary (the Residential Training Centre of Civic College in the village of Kunbábony, 76km south of Budapest) from the 7th to the 11th of July.

The Summer School focused on three main topics: strengthening citizens' participation, environmental sustainability, and the social inclusion and exclusion of minorities. ECAS led three dedicated workshops on European Citizens' Initiatives, European funding opportunities and project management, and European freedom of movement rights.



## “My Mobility Mentor” Pre-departure Meetings

### Pre-departure Meetings in Romania

On 7 and 8 August 2014, pre-departure meetings for Romanian workers who intend to move to Belgium, Italy or the UK took place in Roman, Neamt county in the north-east of Romania and in Targoviste, Dambovita county in the south of Romania. The meetings were attended by around 120 participants who received information on practical issues, working conditions and overviews





of their free movement rights. The Your Europe Advice expert and local EURES agency held a presentation followed by Q & A session.

Both events were recorded ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BiUnf\\_VT\\_Xc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BiUnf_VT_Xc)) and covered by the local media:

[http://adevarul.ro/locale/targoviste/informatii-utile-cei-vor-munceasca-italia-anglia-belgia-1\\_53e835b70d133766a82e7f19/index.html#;](http://adevarul.ro/locale/targoviste/informatii-utile-cei-vor-munceasca-italia-anglia-belgia-1_53e835b70d133766a82e7f19/index.html#;)

<http://www.ziarulderoman.ro/67605/romascanii-care-muncesc-in-strainatate-invata-sa-si-apere-drepturile/>).

### **Pre-departure meeting in Sofia, Bulgaria**

On 5 September 2014, the pre-departure meeting for workers coming from Bulgaria took place at the Bulgarian Information Centre of the European Union in Sofia. This meeting was attended by 80 participants. During the meeting, each representative of the “destination country” (i.e. Belgium, Italy and the UK) presented the main issues that migrant workers may face, what legal obligations they have when residing in another country, and who to contact and what to do if things go



wrong. Additionally, an expert panel was created in order to answer questions of the participants. The panel consisted of civil servants from different Bulgarian institutions, including the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the National Social Security Institute, the National Revenue Agency, the National Health Insurance Fund and the European Commission Representation in Bulgaria. These experts were joined by a EURES representative to provide advice on finding a job in Europe. Much like the event in Romania, the Sofia pre-departure meeting was subject to extensive media coverage on a number of platforms, including radio and television. A list of press clippings, including links to radio interviews and television news stories focussing on the event can be found at <http://goo.gl/7jlo6i>

### **“My Mobility Mentor” Post-arrival “town-hall” meeting**

#### **Post-arrival “town-hall” meeting in Brussels, Belgium**

On 17 October, ECAS organised a seminar titled “My Mobility Mentor – an experiment for workers from Bulgaria and Romania going to Belgium. Your chance to learn about your rights when working abroad.” The event took place at the Royal Library of Belgium and was attended by 80 participants. The aim of the conference was to cover some of the most important issues Romanian and Bulgarian citizens face in Belgium such as residence and social security rights. The morning started with presentations of Your Europe Advice expert, SOLVIT centre, EURES, OR.C.A. and Arthis followed by Q&A sessions. Information was provided on working conditions in Belgium including minimum wage rates, probation periods and other work formalities. The conference was held in English with simultaneous translations into Romanian and Bulgarian. Following up the post-arrival meeting, ECAS has announced the start of a four-month mentoring program for Bulgarian and Romanian workers in Belgium. Under the program, up to 30 Bulgarian and/or Romanian citizens would be able to benefit from tailor-made advice and personalized support while settling down in Belgium.



### Post-arrival “town-hall” meeting in Turin, Italy

25 October 2014



The meeting focused on issues related to the mobility of EU citizens: the European and national legal framework concerning the freedom of movement, as well as employment and health in Italy. The legal requirements to enter and remain in another EU country were explained, as well as issues related to the expulsion of an EU citizen. A migration lawyer, a Your Europe Advice expert, a EURES adviser, and representatives of the Local Healthcare Service and Romanian and Bulgarian Consulates were among the speakers. The meeting in Turin was attended by 34 participants.

### Post-arrival “town-hall” meeting in London, UK

10 November 2014

During the conference, several London-based organizations that provide services for and assistance to migrants shared their experiences. Following the conference, the Law Centres Network announced the launch of a **4-month mentoring program for Bulgarian and Romanian workers in the UK**. Through this program up to 30 Bulgarian and/or Romanian citizens will be able to benefit from customised support when they move to the UK.



## JoiEU Debates

**In 2014, ECAS contributed to the following thematic debates carried out throughout Europe on-line or on the spot:**

### JANUARY

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**21.01.2014 JoiEU debate on the EU and the Economic crises– Cyprus – on-line participation through a webinar (organised by [NGO Support Centre](#), Cyprus).**

On January 21, 2014, the JoiEU partner in Cyprus, the NGO Support Centre, organised this third national and trans-border debate on the impact of the crisis on civil society.

As one of the EU member states hardest hit from the economic crisis, civil society in Cyprus has a lot of lessons to share with its European partners. According to the organizers of the Cyprus debate... “we are dealing with a crisis that is not only financial but also social and institutional. Cyprus and many European countries are experiencing multiple financial and social problems that range from spending cuts, reduction of social & welfare programs and benefits, increased unemployment and poverty

Video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?list=PL8qsb85VaY3S3JXU7Q0IVCJmjIK-sG-WK&feature=player\\_embedded&v=13Lzcz6fQR4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?list=PL8qsb85VaY3S3JXU7Q0IVCJmjIK-sG-WK&feature=player_embedded&v=13Lzcz6fQR4)

### FEBRUARY

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**27.02.2014 JoiEU debate – New Media for Increased Impact – Denmark – on-line participation through a webinar (organised by [Global Citizen](#), Denmark)**

The international part included presentations and interactions by Søren Winther Lundby – Global Citizen, Denmark; Elisa Bruno – ECAS (European Citizen Action Service), Belgium; Savvas Charlabous – NGO Support Centre, Cyprus; Neda Milisic Buklijas – Cenzura Plus, Croatia; Berit Christiansen – Global Citizen, Denmark; Blerina Guga – Partners Albania, Albania; and Petko Georgiev, ProInfo, Bulgaria.

Video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=2ksCo3tFKzY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=2ksCo3tFKzY)

## MARCH

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### **11.03.2014 JoiEU debate - Civil Society and the Non-Europe Debate – Spain – on-line participation through a webinar (organised by [Platforma de ONG de Accion Social, Spain](#))**

On March 11, JoiEU partner, Platforma de ONG de Accion Social, Spain, carried out this month's debate: "Civil Society and the Non- Europe Debate". The participants from Spain and the project partner states addressed the following questions :

- What are the forces trying to break Europe apart?
- How does this affect European citizens?
- What do Civil Society organizations do to address these threats?

## APRIL

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### **15.04.2014 - JoiEU debate – Participation in Political Life, European Elections – Estonia– on-line participation through a webinar**

In a modern democracy, voting is only one of the many ways to participate in politics – it is equally important that citizens have a say in public decisions on a daily basis. Whereas the work of national parliaments tends to be under our close scrutiny, we sometimes lose sight of Members of the European Parliament once they've taken their cosy seats in Brussels and Strasbourg. What can be done to make sure this doesn't happen after the elections this May? The debate on April 15 looked into the theory and practice of the European Parliament's work and presented cases and examples from different European countries. Based on the discussion, a set of recommendations will be made to new MEPs and citizens to facilitate mutual communication and participation.

Video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=ONUrUVOmboE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=ONUrUVOmboE)

## MAY

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### **13.05.2014 - JoiEU debate - Women and a stronger Europe – Netherlands– on-line participation through a webinar (organised by Atria, Netherlands)**

Video: <http://youtu.be/3kFvpy9Z6SY>

Online participation in the debate together with partners from Albania, Denmark, Estonia and Spain

## JUNE

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### **17.06.2014 - JoiEU debate – Solidarity in times of crisis – Romania (organised by NACAB, Romania)**

The **“Civil Society and Solidarity in Times of Crisis. Addressing the Challenges of the Romanian and European Political Crisis”** conference triggered a debate around the idea of civil society solidarity in Europe in response to the challenges that threaten the European Union (EU) and its citizens during this period. The conference presentations and discussions were focused on identifying suitable means to respond to societal challenges in the EU and Romania, also bringing into discussion the funding opportunities for civil society organizations partnership approaches

Video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=cjNgXJNm\\_ng](https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=cjNgXJNm_ng)

## SEPTEMBER

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### **9.09.2014 JoiEU debate– Protecting Citizens' Rights - Italy– on-line participation through a webinar (organised by Cittadinanza Attiva, Italy)**

On September 16, the JoiEU partner in Italy, [Cittadinanzattiva \(Active Citizenship\)](#) organized one of a series of trans-border debates, this time on the issues of **mobility and passengers' rights**.

Video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=KssLZveivM4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=KssLZveivM4)

## OCTOBER

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### **14.10.2014 JoiEU debate - Social Enterprises Development – Albania (participation online and on the spot) – on-line participation through a webinar (organised by Partners Albania, Center for Change and Conflict Management, Albania)**

To follow up the Partners Albania contribution in the social enterprises development, the debate brought together actors from institutions influencing SE development from state agencies, SE representatives, academic institutions, development agencies and donor agencies. The debate featured best practices and challenges from European countries partners in the project from Belgium, Croatia, Czech Republic, Serbia and the UK.

Video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=ockzrXwZ3kl](https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=ockzrXwZ3kl)

**13.11.2014 JoiEU debate - Keeping Europe Open – Serbia – on-line participation through a webinar (organised by [Center for Development of Non-profit Sector](#), Serbia)**

On November 13, 2014, the JoiEU partner in Serbia, [Center for Development of Non-profit Sector](#), hosted the debate " Keeping Europe Open". The debate gathered representatives of relevant government institutions, EU Delegations, civil society organizations, media, and partners of the project from Bulgaria, Belgium and Albania.

The road leads to the European Union. However, the official negotiation process requires mutual openness in holding open the door to Europe. Where are we and what can we expect?

Video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=9S6BJ7Ufngs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=9S6BJ7Ufngs)

**9.12.2014 JoiEU debate - Civil Society and Philanthropy – Czech Republic– on-line participation through a webinar**

**On December 9 2014**, the JoiEU partner in the Czech Republic, [Neziskovky.cz](#), organized the debate "**Civil Society and Philanthropy**" within the "Day of Citizens for Europe". The partner for the event on the Czech side was the Czech Fundraising Centre. The debate gathered representatives of civil society organizations, relevant government institutions, EU institutions, the media, and partners of the project from Bulgaria, Albania, Estonia and others.

Video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=76GDqQH3RHI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=76GDqQH3RHI)

## Regional Conference in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina (27-28 November 2014)

### **Citizens' access to information, advice and active assistance in Western Balkans and Turkey**

The results of the first phase of the Triple A for Citizens project were presented at the Regional Conference in Sarajevo. Taking stock of the knowledge gained during the study visits and the mentoring as well as the implementation of pilot projects in Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Turkey, conference participants exchanged best practices for providing advice and legal assistance. In addition, the participants took part in interactive workshops dedicated to legal clinics, recording systems, sustainable public funding of Triple a services and providing assistance to victims of hate speech and hate crimes. The second phase of the project (2014-2016) was also discussed and planned activities for this next phase were presented.

**Number of participants:** 67

**Agenda of the event:** [http://tripleacitizens.eu/app/uploads/publications/Final\\_agenda\\_PDF.pdf](http://tripleacitizens.eu/app/uploads/publications/Final_agenda_PDF.pdf)



## “Is the Catching up of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) Member States a Mirage?”

3.12.2014 Policy debate in Brussels



On the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the fifth enlargement of the EU, ECAS organised a policy debate “Is the Catching up of CEE Member States a Mirage?”, followed by a networking event.

The Open Society Institute – Sofia presented the findings of the 2014 Edition of the Catch-Up Index. A panel of experts, policy analysts and researchers from CEE Member States

and Brussels-based think-thanks shared their viewpoints on the state of the Union ten years after the biggest enlargement of the EU.



More information:  
<http://www.ecas.org/decade-fifth-enlargement-eu-new-member-states-catching-particularly-regards-economy-still-lag-behind-however-terms-democracy-governance-qualit/>

Participants: 40



European Citizen Action Service  
 77, Avenue de la Toison d'Or  
 B-1060 Brussels, Belgium  
 +32 (0) 2 548 04 90  
 +32 (0) 2 548 04 99  
 info@ecas.org  
 www.ecas.org