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## **“CRISCO: Crossroad of the Regions – fostering involvement of all citizens in local life to Improve Social Cohesion”**

Europe for Citizens Programme 2014-2020

Networks of Towns

EACEA (The Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency)

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***Transnational Event 26-28 September 2018***

***Strasbourg, France***

“CRISCO: Prejudices and precarious individual situations”

## **REPORT**



VIFIN



Gemeente Delft



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## INTRODUCTION

CRISCO's second transnational meeting took place in Strasbourg on 26-28 September 2018 and was focused on the topic "Prejudices and precarious individual situations". Around 60 participants had the chance to get to know local challenges and initiatives and exchange on their experiences and best practices. The meeting was organized by ALDA.





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## AGENDA

### 26 September 2018

Before 15:00      Arrival in Strasbourg  
15:00 – 19:30    Experiencing the city through the Positive Tour  
19:30              Dinner at restaurant Le Grouber

### 27 September 2018

09:00 – 11:00    Public conference at Maison des Associations  
11:00 – 11:30    Coffee break  
11:30 – 13:00    CRISCO Tool fair & lunch at Anticafé Strasbourg  
14:00 – 16:00    Simulation game at Maison des Associations  
16:00 – 16:30    Coffee break  
16:30 – 18:00    Workshop on developing recommendations at Maison des Associations  
18:00 – 19:00    Steering Committee (for project coordinators) at Maison des Associations  
19:30              Dinner at Caveau Restaurant Gurtlerhoft

### 28 September 2018

09:00 – 12:00    Visit of the Council of Europe and discussion with representative of anti-discrimination department





## 26 September 2018, Strasbourg: Positive Tour

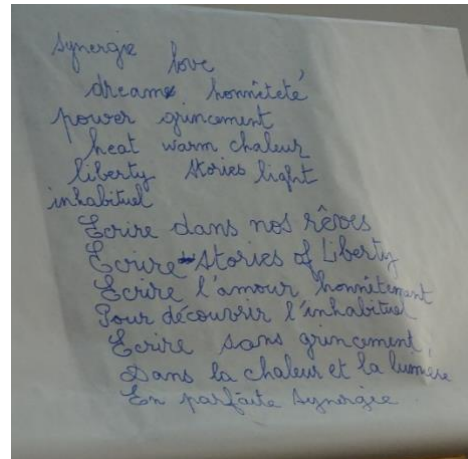


On the first day, the Strasbourg-based non-profit organization [Makers For Change \(MFC\)](#) organized one of their so-called “Positive Tours”. After being divided into three groups, participants were guided by local volunteers around Strasbourg and took part in three activities:

**Visit of the [Hotel Graffalgar](#):** participants had the chance to explore and hear about this unique hotel, which hosts a bar, a radio, events, conferences and projections and where each of the 38 rooms has been designed and decorated by a street artist. Outside the hotel, there is a so-called “frigo solidaire”, which is a fridge where anybody can leave food to be picked up by people in need.

**Workshop at the associative gallery [Art'Course](#):** all members of the three groups visited a gallery displaying works from several artists from the area and had fun playing with words in an interactive activity run by one of the artists.

**Game [Take one step forward](#):** participants played a game about social inclusion based on a concept by the Council of Europe and adjusted by Makers For Change. Each of them was given specific roles and had to put themselves in their shoes. The activity is good for multicultural groups to talk about classes, stereotypes etc.





## 27 September 2018, Maison des Associations: Public Conference

During the public conference on 27<sup>th</sup> September in the morning, several speakers discussed the issue of prejudices and present local initiatives.



Strasbourg Deputy Mayor Ms. **Nawel Rafik-Elmrini** stressed how the fight against prejudices must stay a priority at all levels, especially at a time when more and more importance is given to the antiterrorism and security - often at the cost of human rights and dignity. If media and education are crucial in developing and spreading alternative and positive narratives around the topic of diversity, the role of civil society is also of the foremost importance, as demonstrated by the many concrete examples when it managed to bring topics to the attention of the public and of policy-makers having an actual impact. Despite the many challenges, Ms. Rafik-Elmrini sees progress in the recognition of the requests of civil society by states and in the several local initiatives showcasing positive examples of social inclusion and fostering dialogue between different groups.



Mr. **Jean-François Maljean** from Etterbeek gave a short introduction on the [CRISCO project](#), a two-year project funded by the EU under the programme “Europe for Citizens” in the subgroup “Network of Towns” with the objective to foster cooperation and exchange good practices around the topic of social cohesion and integration. The ten members of the project are constituted by medium-size cities having a cosmopolitan population, each of them having different focuses and ways of tackling the challenges related to integration. The project does not have a specific target group, but is land-based and addresses all groups and minorities. At international meetings, project partners are encouraged to bring with them a varied group composed by local authorities, members of associations and NGOs, and

ordinary citizens in order to share best practices and come up with concrete recommendations. Each partner also has a core group for reflection and action at local level and is responsible for organizing activities.

Ms. **Muriel Mathieu** presented the association [Plurielles](#), which aims to accompany women migrants and their families to make them autonomous and able to enjoy full citizenship rights. The association organizes a variety of workshops covering several aspects, such as: the French language, always put in context and up to a B1 level; daily life, covering family issues, healthcare, transport, law, education etc.; the job market and how to access it; cultural activities; and support with the use of IT tools. Women can also take part in individual meetings to get personalized support and advice, and follow training aimed to facilitate the insertion in the job market.

Mr. **Cédric Bischetti**, president and founder of [Makers For Change](#) (MFC), talked about the work of his association, which has the goal to create an intercultural society, migrants and locals shaping it



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together. MFC aims to change the representations about diversity by fighting discrimination and prejudices, creating links, revealing capacities, and making newcomers autonomous. The association runs a 2- to 4-month programme for newcomers which facilitates social inclusion by creating links, empowers them to create their own project, and supports them in the realization. MFC also organizes events for awareness raising, and works in collaboration with a number of partners, including institutions, companies, media, operational and technical partners etc.

Ms. **Dianne Merran** introduced the work of the association [LICRA du Bas-Rhin](#) after sharing her own story of a refugee arriving to France as a child without documents. The association aims to fight racism and antisemitism and promote liberty and human rights. LICRA carries out several activities, including the provision of judicial support to victims of discrimination, collaboration with schools to educate students on the topic, fight against hate speech on the internet? and organization of and participation in events, conferences, discussion tables and projections.

Ms. **Viviane Desportes** gave a short introduction about [CRENO](#), an enterprise aiming to facilitate the insertion in the job market in the cleaning sector. CRENO offers 24-month insertion contracts during which employees, who are both foreign and French, can also follow training courses (incl. French classes, development of professional projects in several sectors etc.). People are supported individually and valued, and are given the opportunity to discuss issues related to family, health, accommodation etc. The jobs offered are also accessible to people who cannot speak French.







## 27 September 2018, Anticafé: CRISCO Tool fair

The CRISCO Tool Inclusion fair was organized as an open space with different stations/ tables that participants could visit based on their preference. Each participant was free to visit as many stations as possible. This Tool Fair was designed to allow sharing tools and information on how to tackle prejudices and precarious individual situations topic by fostering intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding in European cities. It offered the opportunity to exchange experiences on how to establish new intercultural connections among urban residents and overcome misleading myths/ stereotypes connected to migration at local, national and European level. Each delegation/ organisation was invited to find its personal style of presenting its organisation, the practices and initiatives promoted and tools adopted for implementation.

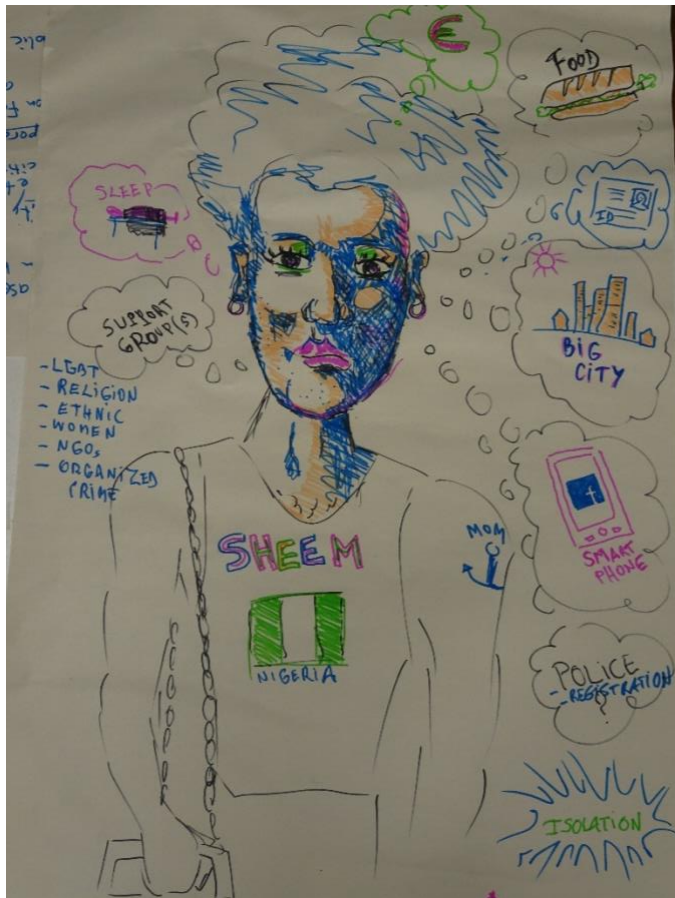


The objectives of the Tool Fair were the following:

- To present a good example of project or tool that helped or can help responding to one or more challenges cities face in fighting prejudices and supporting people with precarious individual situations;
- To exchange information about the different inclusive projects implemented by the project partners + French organisations which has been also invited to the fair;
- To present the local activities implemented by the CRISCO partners prior to the international event;
- To valorise and give visibility to existing practices in promoting urban social and spatial inclusion of citizens with different backgrounds;
- To allow visitors to get inspired from the presented examples/tools and to provide them with key-elements to consider the possibility of transferring/adopting (part of) it in their contexts;
- To gather participants' opinions on how to improve the presented tools/experiences or examples to tackle community inclusion;
- To create opportunities for networking and partnerships.



## 27 September 2018, Maison des Associations: Simulation game



On 27<sup>th</sup> September in the afternoon, attendees took part in another game developed by the Council of Europe and readjusted by ALDA called “Change of glasses”. Divided into several groups, they had to come up with solutions to specific challenges faced by three different people:

- 1) An **asylum seeker** who has just arrived to a new country whose language s/he cannot speak, where s/he doesn't know anybody, and who has to submit her/ his application within 21 days;
- 2) A **homeless man** who is trying to get to see his children, who are not homeless themselves;
- 3) A **person with disabilities** who is going to university and has to face daily challenges.

Each group provided both general and very concrete ideas on how they would behave if they were wearing these people's shoes (or glasses!), often drawing from their experiences or real stories they

heard. It was stressed how it is important to remember that each individual case is unique and that the more details one gave to the person described, the easier it was to empathize. It was mentioned several times that a common trait for these groups is the fact that isolation is one of the biggest risks. The high degree of dependence on others makes it crucial to have trustworthy people, networks and platforms.

The discussion also concerned the risks and benefits of generalization and the difference between generalization, which should be based on data, and stereotypes, which are more linked to prejudices. If categorizing can very often save time in understanding and addressing specific situations, one needs to think of the consequences this will have.

More concretely, participants thought that characters may experience the following issues:

- 1) The **asylum seeker** will probably look for support straight away and will connect with her/ his personal or community networks, if any, or seek help in churches or NGOs. However, the asylum seeker may not want to connect to her/his community, if s/he is afraid of being persecuted for her/his sexual identity or political orientation, for example. S/he will experience issues with the language, will have trouble finding the information s/he needs and may not have a place where to stay or food to eat. S/he may experience legal problems and find it difficult to reconnect with her/his family. S/he may fear human trafficking and would like to find trustworthy platforms to rely on. S/he may end up entering criminal groups if s/he cannot find the support s/he needs.



- 2) Firstly, one needs to think whether the **homeless man** chose to be homeless or he was forced to, and whether he wants help at all. He may not want to meet his family and/ or his family may not want to meet him for a number of reasons, including psychiatric or safety issues. He may be frustrated because his request to see his child was rejected several times and the child grew apart from him. The homeless man may be involved in some sort of social activities with the community or programmes and may often go to public spaces such as libraries. In order to see his child, he may ask for support from a facilitator, mediator or doctor. He is probably ashamed of the way he looks, his status of cleanliness and his clothes; before seeing his child, he will most likely want to take a shower and go to a barber. His pride may be hurt, and he may feel that he deserves being in that situation, and his self-esteem may be low. He may be asking himself: what do I have to offer to my child?
- 3) The **person with disabilities** studying at university needs to plan everything well in advance for her/his day. S/he needs to consider food, transport, accessibility to buildings, and how to learn and take part in the classes (depending on the disability). Of course, different disabilities mean different challenges and needs. Group members imagined this person as surrounded by a supportive family or friends, but it was stressed that this may not always be the case.



## 27 September 2018, Maison des Associations: Recommendations

In the afternoon, participants worked on the development of recommendations related to the topic tackled. Firstly, each participant wrote down three issues based on their personal experience or deriving from reflections on the event. All the issues were then gathered together in groups and recommendations developed for each of them. Participants had to keep the following in mind when coming up with recommendations:

1. Define the objective
2. Decide a target
3. State clearly the call for action
4. Remember the impact in the real world
5. Give options where possible



### Issues

- ✗ Lack of awareness about social issues,
- ✗ Lack of participation in local life of minority groups,
- ✗ Lack of knowledge about other social groups,
- ✗ Fear of the Other, who is often seen as a problem or a threat,
- ✗ Intolerance and racism,
- ✗ It is mainly bad stories making it to the press,
- ✗ Lack of interaction between social groups and (sub)cultures,
- ✗ Lack of interest and/ or apathy towards social issues.

### ↳ Potential solutions

- ✓ NGOs and civil society should work with the media, politicians and the educational system to create, deliver and amplify positive messages and narratives and raise awareness around social issues, also using social media.
- ✓ Memories and past history should be recalled.



- ✓ All Europeans could take a DNA test to prove that everybody comes from everywhere.
- ✓ Society needs to be changed by developing true models of integration.
- ✓ The knowledge of and the interactions between different (social) groups and associations should be increased involving municipalities, NGOs, civil society, citizens, community teachers etc. This can be done, for instance:
  - by facilitating meetings in attractive public spaces, offering special treats such as food and handouts, and organizing cultural events and sport activities as part of the meetings,
  - by providing platforms where locals and newcomers can cooperate,
  - by giving access to funding having as a prerequisite a minimum number of partners.

#### Issues

- ✗ Slowness of public administrations,
- ✗ Unnecessary influence of bureaucrats.

#### ↳ Potential solutions

- ✓ Other sources of expertise such as educated people from marginalized groups should be identified and trained, recognizing their education and making them valuable,
- ✓ A local leader could be identified.

#### Issue

- ✗ Misuse of social media such as bullying and hate speech.

#### ↳ Potential solutions

- ✓ Parents and the educational system should be trained and work together.
- ✓ Influential people could set the example and help spread positive messages.

#### Issue

- ✗ Society and administration are more and more digitalized, but several groups are left out of this revolution, such as old or illiterate people or people with disabilities.

#### ↳ Potential solution

- ✓ Home services, training etc.

#### Issues

- ✗ People with disabilities are invisible to governments,
- ✗ People with disabilities have huge accessibility issues.

#### ↳ Potential solution

- ✓ Clear criteria for accessibility should be identified.
- ✓ Buildings should be mapped.
- ✓ Existing national and EU legislation should be enforced.
- ✓ Disabilities should be included in the planning project phase,
- ✓ Citizens and authorities should be educated to issues related to disabilities.
- ✓ Accessibility training for architects and similar professional figures should be made mandatory.

#### Other issues:





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- Balance between paid and voluntary work
- Importance given to social status (who are your parents? Where do you live? Do you have a degree?)
- Youth are going abroad or to bigger cities
- Adults think youth are doing nothing
- Language barriers
- Limited resources and possibilities in small towns
- Issues with finding accommodation
- Empowering social actors and volunteers
- Social mobility
- Difficulties in meeting authorities' expectations to be self-sufficient
- Sustainability of integration projects
- Difficulties in finding a balance between single-interest associations and common work
- Lack of interest in learning the local language
- Lack of facilitation for ethnic entrepreneurship





## 27 September 2018, Maison des Associations: Steering Committee

Project coordinators did a *tour de table* and presented local events.

The **Danish** partner talked about the local meeting they organized in May and the challenges they are facing. Some of the people involved initially are losing interest, as they are not seeing anymore the value of the group.

The local meeting of the **Albanian** partner took place in September and had the objective to discuss prejudices against Albanians and share personal stories around the topic. Over a half of the attendees were already present in the previous meeting, and citizens are very interested in taking part in the project. The Belgian partner requested that, on top of officials and NGOs, ordinary citizens from Albania should be invited to the next transnational meetings.

The **Italian** partner presented the different activities implemented over the last six months. They had a discussion about the inclusion through arts, followed by a flash mob and a dance class with refugees and asylum seekers in a museum. The group also met to prepare for the international meeting debating the prejudices and individual precarious situations. The main outcome of the meeting was new practices to bring about change need to be invented.

The **Slovenian** partner said that their group is very fluid and is including different citizens. Several events have been organized in the framework of the project: a 2-day event with young youth workers in which activists from Berlin working on inclusion were invited to share their experiences; a “Living Library”, where participants could learn from each other and overcome prejudices; an event in which young people could discuss the issue of discrimination with experts.

After the first transnational meeting, the **Estonian** partner organized an informal meeting with the core members interested in the project and two experts. It was particularly challenging to organize the event at the end of August because of the summer holidays.

The **French** partner organized the meeting at the end of September.

The **Lithuanian** partner organized a meeting focused especially on gender-related stereotypes and prejudices involving two experts from the Social Innovation Fund. It was challenging to invite people and the participation rate was low.

The **Latvian** partner held a meeting in July where an expert talked about how false news increase prejudices in society. Given the time of the meeting, only 20 participants attended.

The **Dutch** partner organized several meetings to discuss which topics to address. Two themes came out of the discussion: discrimination in the employment market and in education, and influence of the media. The stakeholders meeting will take place in the following months given the sensitivity of the issue. On the positive side, the local panel managed to extend, now having also institutions, NGOs and universities involved.

The **Belgian** partner organized cooking workshops joined with the projection of a movie reflecting the cooking aspect of certain countries.

Next translational meeting will take place on 21-23 January 2019 in **Vejle** (Denmark) and will be focused on the topic of language barriers, also including social integration related to communication barriers. The local panel is meeting to discuss about the details of the event. The CRISCO partners will receive well in advance instructions from Denmark to prepare for the Vejle transnational meeting. It is asked to Vejle to provide for a specific working session during their meeting on the handbook on “fostering involvement of all citizens in local life to improve social cohesion”.

The last transnational meeting will be held on 25-28 June (three nights) in **Etterbeek** (Belgium). The Belgian partner stressed that accommodation needs to be booked well in advanced. The last



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transnational meeting in Brussels will be longer because it is the last one and time will be dedicated to prepare the handbook on “fostering involvement of all citizens in local life to improve social cohesion”. The base for this handbook will be the results and reports of the transnational CRISCO meetings, as well as the partner’s local progress reports. CRISCO delegations in Brussels will have to be composed of 6 people instead of 5.

ALDA stressed the importance of communications activities. The CRISCO partners are asked to maintain an active communication: newsletters, local press, social media...

ALDA has sent a first version of the CRISCO plans: dissemination, communication, monitoring, evaluation. A new slightly revised version will be circulated soon.

The Belgian partner recommended double-checking all payments/ installments. He also presented the results of the bilateral meetings suggestions and encouraged all partners to take the time to speak to each other and fix the date for the meeting. The effective implementation of these bilateral meetings (with signed attendance lists) are necessary to receive the EU grant. Please keep Etterbeek informed of your intentions.

Partners suggested to keep the handbook simple and useful, focusing on main conclusions, findings and recommendations, the rest (presentation of our activities), being already in the local and transnational reports.







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## 27 September 2018, Council of Europe: Visit



On the last day of the event, project participants took part in a guided tour of the Council of Europe and could hear about the history, membership and functioning of this institution, watch an introductory video, and visit several areas, including the Grand Assembly Chamber.



Participants also had the chance to meet and discuss with Mr. Menno Ettema, Programme manager for cooperation projects on hate speech, hate crime and discrimination. Mr. Ettema talked extensively about hate speech as well as how to draw the line between freedom of expression and hate speech. He also presented the work of the [anti-discrimination directorate of the Council of Europe](#) in terms of setting standards, monitoring and developing cooperation programmes. In particular, he talked about the campaign “[No hate speech movement](#)”, which aims to mobilize young people to combat hate speech and promote human rights online.

