

Report from webinars arranged as a part of the project "EU awareness".

Project no. 601453-CITIZ-1-2018-1-ES-CITIZ-CIV

Partner: VIFIN

A total of 6 webinars were arranged, in conjunction with local debate meetings. All webinars were streamed live via YouTube, while embedded and promoted through VIFIN's Facebook page.

The Webinars have further been transformed into an audio-only podcast format and published on Soundcloud in order to reach more citizens.

All webinars were promoted digitally via Facebook before they aired, and afterwards providing links to the video on demand / podcast.

Total live viewers: 65

Total current views: 164

Total current plays on Soundcloud: 14

Total current views across platforms: 168

Webinar 1:

Date: September 19th 2019

Live viewers: 21

Current views: 58

Current plays on Soundcloud: 4

Total views across platforms: 62

Link to the Webinar on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9097p23U_xs

Soundcloud: <https://soundcloud.com/vifinvejle/eu-awareness-webinar-1>

Topic: "Exchange students, the borders of the EU, and the effect of the EU on the Danish industry".

Conclusion: During the first debate three main themes were touched upon, the issues were mainly discussed in economic terms. Concerning exchange students, a discussion were had on the recent decision taken by the European Union (making exchange students equally qualified for the Danish study-grant on equal footing with their fellow Danish students). On the topic of the European borders, a discussion was had on the Schengen agreement, and the reasons no permanent border control can be established.

The Webinar focused on explaining the facts of the Schengen agreement, examining the economic impact of exchange students in Denmark, and explaining the industrial development, and gradual liberalization of the European markets through, using the “four freedoms” as a springboard.

Webinar 2:

Date: October 3rd 2019

Live viewers: 17

Current views: 31

Current plays on Soundcloud: 1

Total views across platforms: 32

Link to the webinar on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RIqnFcSADXY>

Soundcloud: <https://soundcloud.com/vifinvejle/eu-awareness-webinar-2>

Topic: “The budget of the EU, and how the EU fights for the climate”

Conclusion: During the second debate discussions mainly focused on how the money the EU collects from member states are spend, and if the EU really can be a vehicle for positive climate action. On the topic of the European Budget the official headings were explained, and specific programmes were picked out from each heading, in order to give a better picture of how the EU budget is allocated (Success projects such as ATLAS, and NUTRI2CYCLE). Further the efforts of the EU on climate were explained, especially with concern to the quota-system. Focus were also put on the electoral gains of the European Greens after the 2019 parliamentary elections.

The question of European energy security was also mentioned during the webinar, since it’s a key area intimately connected with a potential European green transformation.

Webinar 3:

Date: October 24th 2019

Live viewers: 7

Current views: 32

Current plays on Soundcloud: 5

Total views across platforms: 37

Link to the webinar on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VqgwPBwWgQ>

Soundcloud: <https://soundcloud.com/vifinvejle/eu-awareness-webinar-3>

Topic: "The EU and Fake News"

Conclusion: A core part of the project is to educate and inform the general population on how to read media critically. Dispelling Euro-myths is not just about showing which already-existing myths persist, but also to prevent future misleading news stories from spreading. Further, the EU provides certain tools such as "How to spot when the news is fake (news compass)

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=EPRS_ATA\(2017\)599386](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=EPRS_ATA(2017)599386). Thus this webinar had the express purpose of a) providing citizens with tools and advice on reading media critically b) inform the public about the dangers of disinformation spreading, and c) showcasing the European strategy to combat fake news (The European Action Plan Against Disinformation). Furthermore a concrete example of another successful project concerning fake news funded by the Union was showcased (project "No Alternative Facts").

Webinar 4:

Date: November 20th 2019

Live viewers: 14

Current views: 29

Current plays on Soundcloud: 2

Total views across platforms: 31

Link to the webinar on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HqeNI14H8bk>

Soundcloud: <https://soundcloud.com/vifinvejle/eu-awareness-webinar-4>

Topic: "The European Institutions, and the Spitzenkandidat process".

Conclusion: While many citizens are aware of the parliamentary elections and their results, few know about the complex interplay between the three European institutions responsible for legislation, namely, the Parliament, the Commission, and the Council. This webinar focused on explaining the makeup of the institutions, how members are chosen, and which role they individually play. Furthermore the 2014 innovation of the Spitzenkandidat-process was also explained, along with the rationale of lessening the democratic deficit of the Union.

Further the EU project "Smart Mature Resilience" was presented as a positive story of European cooperation.

Webinar 5:

Date: December 12th 2019

Live viewers: 4

Current views: 8

Current plays on Soundcloud: 1

Total views across platforms: 9

Link to the webinar on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NLpR7V5cxfA>

Soundcloud: <https://soundcloud.com/vifinvejle/eu-awareness-webinar-5>

Topic: “How can you have an effect on EU policy”

Conclusion: Many citizens have opinions about the EU, whether informed or not. Though a large part of the citizenry is not aware of how they can have an effect on EU policy, and make their voice heard themselves. Thus the focus on this webinar was a) to inform about the European Parliamentary elections, emphasizing the results from the elections in 2019 b) to inform about other instruments for citizens participation. “Other instruments” included the European Citizens’ initiatives, and the public hearings. In conjunction with the explanation of the Citizens’ initiative, several official EU critiques of the system were explained as well. The webinar concluded by informing about the “Conference on the Future of Europe”, a process running from 2020 – 2022 meant to put a focus on active citizen participation.

Webinar 6:

Date: December 19th 2019

Live viewers: 2

Current views: 6

Current plays on Soundcloud: 1

Total views across platforms: 7

Link to the webinar on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lyaeYyMAVHE>

Soundcloud: <https://soundcloud.com/vifinvejle/eu-awareness-webinar-6>

Topic: “The Future of the European Union”

Conclusion: The final webinar presented visions of the future of the EU, both from within, and from other voices. First and foremost Commission President Ursula Von der Leyen’s roadmap for the Union 2019-2024 was presented, along with main points contained therein. Afterwards two fact-based criticisms of the European system was presented. This was done to underscore that, even though the project is funded by the European Union with the express purpose of good policies, it must not be forgotten that media criticism involves the ability to identify and bring to the conversation *good* critique and not only to dismiss *bad* critique.

The perspectives chosen were from two well known, respected public academics. The first presented was Mark Blyth, Blyth’s work have focused on the Eurozone crisis, and the emergence of European populism. The second presented was Jürgen Habermas. Habermas’ credentials speak for themselves, and the critique presented from his point of view concerned the democratic functioning of the union, emphasizing his perspective of transnational conversations.

