

## EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

(To be filled in and uploaded as deliverable in the Portal Grant Management System, at the due date foreseen in the system.

 Please provide one sheet per event (one event = one workpackage = one lump sum).)

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

EVENT DESCRIPTION			
Event number:	D3		
Event name:	Greener cities, greener EU		
Type:	Workshop		
In situ/online:	<i>In-Situ</i>		
Location:	Gdynia, Poland		
Date(s):	16 - 18 May 2025		
Website(s) (if any):			
Participants			
Female:	25		
Male:	21		
Non-binary:	-		
From country 1 Italy	7		
From country 2 Spain	7		
From country 3 Poland	28		
From country 4 Romania	4		
Total number of participants:	46	From total number of countries:	4
Description			
<i>Provide a short description of the event and its activities.</i>			



The third segment of the Better Future Festival project, managed by the European Network of Family-Friendly municipalities and the European Confederation of Large Families (ELFAC), took place in Gdynia, Poland, on May 16th through 18th, 2025. This event was grant-funded by the Citizens, Equality, Rights, and Values (CERV) call of the EU.

This segment of the Better Future Festival project saw attendance by network cities Alghero (Italy), Bacau (Romania), and Creixell (Spain). These municipalities were joined by the members of the ELFAC board. The theme of this two-day festival was 'Greener Cities, Greener EU.'

This segment of the project aimed to support the EU Green Deal by engaging citizens and municipalities in greater reflection and action towards the construction of green cities. Workshops and discussions were established to provide a platform for participants to reflect on and act towards the development of sustainable urban areas with accessible green spaces.

On May 16th, participants were invited to a workshop led by Marta Jarosińska from the Department of Environment of the City of Gdynia, introducing participants to the causes and the challenges of the climate crisis. Following this workshop, municipalities met on May 17th to exchange best practices in the environmental realm, including a discussion by young people.

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

### **Workshop of best practices**

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

The hosting municipality of Gdynia began by presenting a series of green projects designed to tackle and mitigate the consequences of climate change within the municipality. These projects were particularly targeted at alleviating the damage caused by recent floods, which affected the most exposed parts of the city. In response to this flooding, Gdynia engaged in the removal of asphalt in several key areas, increasing viable water drainage to prevent future flooding. Gdynia also presented an initiative to plant trees in both private and public spaces. Citizens were given a contribution of up to €250 per year to plant new trees, while public municipal investments of approximately €50,000 per year were dedicated to public spaces. This initiative resulted in Gdynia planting 320 new trees and 1,657 new shrubs in just one year.

The municipality then spoke about its textile waste collection project, aiming to alleviate the pollution caused by textile waste in industrial settings. A municipal representative explained the significant success of the program – 55,375 kg of clothing has been recovered, 90% of which has been reused, saving 714 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent.

In response to recent flooding, Gdynia introduced the "Clever Flood" project – an exhibition first created in Portugal and intended to tour Europe. This exhibition aims to inform citizens about how food production functions, raising awareness for the importance of local production, sustainable consumption, and waste reduction at all stages of the supply chain. Inspired by the exhibition, the

museum CN Experyment has created a mobile app called “Mr. Goldfish” for the sustainable consumption of the traditional local fish products.

Gdynia did not forget to address the social dimension of sustainability, emphasizing its efforts to raise awareness of the issues of Agenda 2030 and the environment, but also to improve and enhance citizen participation in city governance. In fact, the municipality is the first Polish city where all citizens, even young children, have political representative rights and a right to vote, making universal suffrage a reality. This is possible thanks to a system of delegation to parents and a platform that allows them to express their preferences on projects related to the participatory budget (equal to 5% of the municipal budget), to which all citizens are invited to submit proposals and projects. The 322 projects submitted in one year directly express the preferences and participation of citizens, who are personally involved in the entire process -- from the design to the implementation of the initiatives.

The municipality of Bacau (Romania) presented about its allocation of European funds towards improving the quality of family life in the city. A large municipal park, with sports and leisure activities, is under construction.

Additionally, other local green areas have been built. To change the appearance of grey, colorless streets, the municipality is acting on a small scale by painting containers in bright colors, adding trees and plants, and hosting street artists during the summer to decorate some of the city's duller buildings.

Alghero (Italy) presented a video describing the municipality's main green areas, as well as its initiatives related to sustainable transport and management of naturally valuable areas.

Gianfranco Mariano, a member of Alghero's delegation, presented the “door-to-door” waste collection system of the city, capable of responding to the needs of citizens but also of adapting to the massive increase in population during the summer. The door-to-door system aims to proactively reduce pollution by keeping waste contained, while simultaneously adapting to the unique needs of the city's changing population.

Creixell (Spain) presented information about its natural environment, protected areas, and the issues associated with its population size, which changes drastically between winter and summer.

Mayor Montserrat Muñoz from Creixell shared about an ongoing issue with the national environmental authorities regarding the management of car parks in protected natural areas near the beach. This issue raises the question of how to reconcile the needs of citizens, particularly the elderly and people with reduced mobility, with environmental protection.

The topic sparked a lively discussion about issues of management and sustainability, which touched on the topics of public transport, parking, respect for protected areas, and separate waste collection.

Gdynia suggested that Creixell open a direct dialogue with residents through a public conference where requests and ideas for improving the city could be gathered. Mauro Ledda, from Alghero, emphasized the importance of education, to create awareness of the need to care for public property and the natural and historical beauty of cities, maintaining a positive and proactive attitude, which finds its key to success in collaboration with the families.

Direct citizen participation, and in particular the right to vote extended to younger people through their legal representatives, was discussed among the municipalities present, with Bacau (Romania) recounting its experience of a “children's council” set up in collaboration with UNICEF, which was called upon to express opinions on municipal policies.

### **Manifesto of Young People**

During the Better Future Festival event in Creixell, student participants from Poland, Romania, Spain, Hungary, Lithuania, and Italy came together for a forum with the aim of creating a manifesto that outlined the vision of Europe aspired to by young people. This manifesto was developed to highlight desired changes and the expectations placed on local and national governments, as well as on the EU. During the event in Gdynia, students were prompted to specifically focus on environmental issues, with the workshop theme being “Greener Today for the Better Future.”

This session began with an engaging exercise in which participants reflected on what “Greener Today” meant to them in their real lives. Student participants identified key themes such as biodiversity, sustainable urban design, eco-technology, waste reduction, food donation, and improvements in public transport.

Following this reflection, youth participants were prompted to develop a list of key priorities for future EU policy, with specific emphasis being placed on the environment. Within this workshop, students identified three key areas of focus: (1) green urban policy and (2) local activism.

In the area of green urban policy, the group discussed the many barriers to building greener cities. These included high costs, limited environmental awareness, political disagreements, and dependence on centralized policies. The students agreed that improved environmental education is

needed in tandem with effective green policy, allowing constituents to truly understand the pressing threat of climate change to humanity. If information were made more accessible through education, youth argued that environmental awareness would likely increase substantially, improving support for green policy.

Students also proposed thoughtful and creative solutions to the challenges of climate change, including the promotion of local public transport in smaller municipalities. Students agreed that, while public transit is a widely accessible norm in large cities, transportation infrastructure often lacks in smaller municipalities. By making high-quality, widely accessible public transit an option in all cities, students argued that municipalities might be able to substantially reduce their carbon footprint.

Additionally, youth participants proposed the idea of rooftop gardens, which would serve to bring plant life into urban spaces with limited land, thereby maximizing urban square footage. Along the same line, students proposed the idea of increasing funding for the renovation of old buildings to reduce energy consumption and bring plant life and green spaces back into urban environments. Youth also discussed the challenges presented by declining biodiversity, concluding that policy could encourage the planting of wild or native species in both public and private spaces, as opposed to decorative grass or non-native species. This process of re-wilding could effectively increase biodiversity, even in urban spaces, combating the threat of species invasion and homogeneity on plant and animal life.

In the area of local activism, students reflected on how young people often lack influence in local governance and decision-making. The youth involved in this forum expressed an acute interest in having more influential capacity in the legislative processes of their municipalities, allowing them to affect climate-related policy. The students developed the idea of youth focus groups as a potential solution to this problem. If such a project were to be adopted, youth would be able to join government-sponsored groups to share their ideas regarding green development and influence the creation of green initiatives.

### **Event Video and News Coverage**

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

The link to the video of the Gdynia event by the municipality of Alghero can be found [here](#).

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

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

Official news of the event in the site of the municipality [here](#).

Media:

<https://diaridigital.tarragona21.com/creixell-present-a-polonia-en-el-marc-del-better-future-festival-europeu/>

<https://www.infocamp.cat/arxiu-seccio-medi-ambient/item/67286-creixell-ha-estat-present-a-polonia-en-el-marc-del-better-future-festival-europeu>

Social media:

<https://www.facebook.com/gdyniaedukacyjna/posts/w-najbli%C5%BCszy-weekend-w-gdynia-odb%C4%99dzie-si%C4%99-better-future-festival/1200131738574799/>

<https://www.instagram.com/p/DJrdlxooUBK/?hl=af>

<https://www.instagram.com/p/DK8yY3tl8Yw/?hl=en>

<https://www.facebook.com/GdynskieCentrumKultury/posts/-better-future-festival-2025-w-gdynia-podsumowanie-weekendu-w-miniony-weekend-mi/1112119007610329/>

### **PROGRAM**

BETTER FUTURE FESTIVAL – GREENER CITIES, GREENER EU

16-18.05.2025, Gdynia – Poland

Day 1. 16.05. Friday

11:00 – Alghero group – Climate Fresk – workshop leads by Marta Jarosińska from Department of Environment of the city of Gdynia in CN Experyment

14:00 – Physics of new technologies – workshop leads by CN Experyment

<https://experyment.gdynia.pl/en/>

20:00 – Dinner at Vinegre (vinegre.pl)

<https://maps.app.goo.gl/snwRJDaaPvvfdh8V7>

Day 2. 17.05. Saturday

9:00 – Participant registration and welcome coffee at Konsulat Kultury

10:00 – Conference opening

Katarzyna Korzeniewska – Director, Gdynia Culture Centre

Maciej Zielonka – Vice-President City of Gdynia

Maria Regina Florio – Coordinator of the Network of Family-Friendly Municipalities

Raul Sanchez – Secretary General, ELFAC

10:30 – Exchange of Good Municipal Practices:

Bacau: Lucian-Ionut Andrei, city council of Bacau

Creixell: Montserrat Muñoz, mayor of Creixell

Alghero: Mauro Ledda, office for family policies of the municipality of Alghero

Gdynia: Marta Jasińska from Department of Environment of the city of Gdynia and Anna Sowa from CN Experyment

11:30 – Conclusions

11:30 – Youth debate/workshop – Greener today for the better future – manifest

12:30 – Lunch provided by Konsulat Kultury

14:00 – Guided tour of the city (in English) led by Agnieszka Drączkowska-Gradzik

16:00 – Free time, activities for families in the Konsulat Kultury

Day 3, 18.05 Sunday

10:00 Workshops for international participants at the CN Experyment.

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