

The project “1968-2018 Do it yourself – Create your own society” was funded with the support of the European Union under the Programme “Europe for Citizens”

Applicable to the Strand 2 – Strand 1 – “European Remembrance”

3 events have been carried out within the project “1968-2018 Do it yourself – Create your own society”, each with a customised opening event accompanied by the traveling pop-up museum called the “WHAT IF?! Pop-up museum”.

“What if...?” It seems such a simple question, but it can set enormous change in motion. In order to overthrow the status-quo, you first have to be able to look beyond it. Doing that requires imagination, a vision of how things could be different in EU.

The traveling pop-up museum existed of three general parts to activate participants to reflect on how they and others can create their own European society:

- **“What if!? Pop-up museum”:** fifty years after ‘68, this exhibition connected the past with the present: what has become of the ideals of ‘68 and where do we find this ‘spirit of 1968’ nowadays? The museum showed personal stories of ‘68ers’ from Eastern and Western Europe and daring ideas from today’s young thinkers in text, photo and video.
- **“What if!? Photo booth”** in which all participants were invited to share their visions for the future of Europe. The reactions were shown in a slideshow on the outside of the Photo booth and presented on the website, resulting in a growing crowdsourced overview of ‘What European Citizens Want’.
- **“What if!? Balance game”:** participants were invited to play against each other, placing wooden dolls on opposing values printed on the balancing tower. The game resulted in many hilarious balancing acts and exciting discussions on different European values. Because, isn't that what our democratic system is, a balance game?

Event 1:

Participation: The event involved 307 citizens, including 257 participants from the city of Warsaw (PL), 4 participants from the city of Poznan (PL), 2 participants from the city of Rubnik (PL), 1 participant from the city of Orsay (PL), 3 participants from the city of Lodz (PL), 4 participants from the city of Plock (PL), 3 participants from the city of Berlin (DE), 1 participant from the city of Manchester (UK), 2 participants from the city of Biatystok (PL), 4 participants from the city of Blonie (PL), 6 participants from the city of Gdynia (PL), 1 participant from the city of Wotomin (PL), 4 participants from the city of Krakau (PL), 2 participants from the city of Siedlce (PL), 5 participants from the city of Rzens (PL), 2 participants from the city of Torun (PL), 3 participants from the city of Roznow (PL), 2 participants from the city of Amsterdam (NL), 1 participant from the city of Utrecht (NL).

Location / Dates: The event took place in the city of **Warsaw, Poland**, from 08/03/2018 to 07/04/2018.

Short description:

The specific aim of this event was to activate European citizenship on the values of press freedom and censorship, and the polarisation between left and right, next to the general aim of all event to activate EU citizens to reflect upon European values in general.

On 8 March ‘68 students in Poland took the streets to protest censorship and demand freedom of press. Although they were violently crushed, these demonstrations were an important prelude to the successful pro-democracy movements in Poland in later years. Exactly 50 years after the protest our opening event took place: in “the Big Polish 8 March Media Debate” journalists from the ‘68-generation from the left and the right discussed the state of the polarized media with young journalists from left and right. Some journalists in Poland refuse to pronounce each other’s names, let alone understand each other’s world views. What does that do to society? What responsibility do the journalists have themselves? The event resulted in lively discussions on the spot that continued in online media.

Polish (right-wing) Journalist Marcin Makowski (1986) concluded after our debate “It’s ‘unique that they were more or less forced into a conversation with each other during this event”. Perhaps the media will always be polarized, ready to make deals with the government, to take shallow shortcuts. But I myself, along with my colleagues, make up that media. And to a large extent it is not the “system,” but our individual standpoints – as with the people of March 1968 – that will decide upon how we write our page of history.”

Seweryn Blumsztajn (left-wing Polish journalist) during our event “The Big 8 March Media Debate”: “It’s amazing how well-mannered and civilised that right-wing boy is. Much better than expected, I have to say.”

Event 2:

Participation: The event involved 132 citizens, including 74 participants from the city of Amsterdam (NL), 3 participants from the city of Nuenen (NL), 21 participants from the city of Deventer (NL), 12 participants from the city of Leeuwarden (NL), 5 participants from the city of The Hague (NL), 6 participants from the city of Utrecht (NL), 3 participants from the city of Castricum (NL), 1 participant from the city of Tilburg (NL), 1 participant from the city of Paris (FR), 2 participants from the city of Freiburg (DE), 2 participants from the city of Berlin (DE), 2 participants from the city of Brussels (BE).

Location / Dates: The event took place in Amsterdam (Netherlands), from 31/05/2018 to 03/06/2018, in Deventer (Netherlands) on 14/06/2018, in Amsterdam (Netherlands) from 25/08/2018 to 26/08/2018, in Leeuwarden (Netherlands) from 01/09/2018 to 30/09/2018 and in Amsterdam (Netherlands) on 27/10/2018.

Short description:

The aim of the event was to reflect and inspire participants on innovative ideas to improve and protect democracy. ‘The most important thing of ‘68 was the process of change itself.’ The topic of the opening event in NL was innovative ways to create change. Alain Geismar, one of the leading activists of the May ‘68 revolts in Paris, shared his witness accounts of the revolution and looked into the effects. Young thinkers and activists from all over Europe shared their inspiring ideas for the future. What are their ideas to smash the present-day status-quo? The event –part of the Forum on EU Culture– resulted in interesting discussions between the panel and the audience. The pop-up museum was part of 4 other events in the Netherlands: ‘The Biggest Knowledge Festival of The Netherlands’ in Deventer; ‘Cultural Capital of the EU’ in Leeuwarden; and the philosophical ‘Brainwash Festival’ and the opening of the cultural year ‘Uitmarkt’ in Amsterdam. Visitors actively participated in the balance game and photo booth during the events.

Flavia Kleiner (1990) from Switzerland is a historian and the leader of Operation Libero, calls herself a conservative in the context of ‘68: “In 1968, citizens fought for freedoms. Fifty years later, I’m trying to defend those freedoms. It feels strange that I, a young person for goodness’ sake, am the one who is trying to maintain the status quo. I fight for the preservation of very basic liberties.”

Quote of a Dutch visitor of the pop-up museum: “The different portraits of the museum gave me quite some food for thought. In my daily live, I do not explicitly think of the values I stand for. Your event made me aware that it is important, and that it is important that these personal stories are told.”

Event 3: CZ

Participation: The event involved 315 citizens, including 305 participants from the city of Prague (CZ), 4 participants from the city of Chrvoim (CZ), 3 participants from the city of Senohraby (CZ), 3 participants from the city of London (UK).

Location / Dates: The event took place in. Prague, Czech Republic, from 16/06/2018 to 11/08/2018.

Short description:

The specific aim of the event was to have people reflect upon and remember the historic turning point in 1968. An iconic year and an important influencer in the history of the European Union.

There is a Prague of before ‘68 and a Prague of after ‘68. The revolutionary year is still a trauma for many Czechs and Slovaks alike. The year started in a positive vibe: the regime loosened up and the Prague Spring blossomed. Until Moscow occupied with hundreds of thousands Warsaw Pact troops the country. In the summer of 2018, exactly 50 years after this pivotal year, we opened the WHAT IF!? Pop-Up Museum on the spirit of ‘68 in the Prague cinema BIO|Oko. During the opening weekend there were special activities in which the audience could participate. Visitors could make their very own ‘propaganda animation’ based on iconic images of 1968 with the help of the Dutch design collective Propaganda by the People. High school kids followed a workshop and there was a lecture of Jiri Kolda, who was shot.

Lena (13), high school student in Prague on the event: “Making the animations really made me think about freedom. I know the stories of my grand-parents and they sometimes make me afraid when I look to today. But I realize now more that I can work on freedom myself.”