

EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

PROJECT	
Participant:	EucA - European university college Association
PIC number:	949079429
Project name and acronym:	VOICES: Migration Stories for Inclusive Policies (VOICES - 101196241)

1. EVENT DESCRIPTION	
Event number:	4
Event name:	High-Level Summit on Anti-Racism and Integration Strategies for Local Policy-makers
Type:	Workshops and training sessions
In situ/online:	in-situ
Location:	Brussels
Date(s):	13-15 January 2026
Website(s) (if any):	https://www.euchangemakers.com/voices and https://www.euchangemakers.com/voices-high-level-summit
Participants	
Female:	26
Male:	36
Non-binary:	0
Hungary	1
Italy	37
Greece	1
Germany	2
France	1
Portugal	1
Belgium	19
Total number of participants:	62
	From total number of countries: 7

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Description

Provide a short description of the event and its activities.

The fourth event of the VOICES project took place in Brussels from 13 to 15 January 2026 and represented the start of the advocacy and policy writing phase of the project.

The Brussels event was specifically conceived to draft a Local Anti-Racism and Integration Action Plan, with a territorial focus on Calabria and Southern Italy. Building on the project's participatory methodology, the Summit brought together local administrators, EU policymakers, civil society organisations, international students and migrant communities to translate lived experiences and policy recommendations into actionable local commitments, in line with the EU Anti-Racism Action Plan 2020-2025.

During the first three VOICES events, held in 2025, a group of students representing the Youth Squads drafted three policy recommendations after gathering insights and suggestions from the 70 migration testimonies collected. The High Level Summit in Brussels capitalised on these outcomes by creating a structured space for policy dialogue and co-drafting at local level. Across three consecutive days, the event was attended by a total of 62 participants from 7 EU countries. Among them, a delegation of 17 Mayors from Calabria and other 10 local administrators from Rosarno took part in the activities bringing a local yet institutional point of view to the discussion. The Summit was also attended by a delegation of international students, migration testimonies and representatives of civil society in Calabria and Brussels such as Associazione OASI, that works for migrants integration in Rosarno and manages the Village of Solidarity, Associazione Calabresi in Europa, based in Brussels and working for representation of the Calabrian Community abroad, and PICUM (Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants), a network of organisations working to ensure social justice and human rights for undocumented migrants. Moreover, regional, national and international point of views were represented by delegates from the Calabria Region, of the Italian Parliament and Ministry of the Interior, MEP Giusi Princi and EU officials from DG JUST, DG HOME and EACEA. These last participants were not counted in the total of attendees of the event.

The event was further enriched by the opening and showcasing of the audiovisual exhibition "Rosarno, Capital of Integration: Voices from Migrations for European Inclusive Policies" at the European Parliament. The exhibition showed photos, testimonies and audiovisual materials collected during the project, offering participants and institutional audiences an immersive narrative connecting migration stories to the outcomes of integration policies in Rosarno. By bringing migrant voices directly into the European Parliament, the exhibition reinforced the Summit's objectives and strengthened the link between grassroots testimonies and institutional policymaking.

Pre-event activities

In the months preceding the event, EucA undertook extensive preparatory activities to ensure stakeholder engagement and the meaningful participation of all actors involved. This included close coordination with Giusi Princi, Member of the European Parliament, to secure institutional hosting and support for the audiovisual exhibition "Rosarno, Capital of Integration: Voices from Migrations for European Inclusive Policies" within the European Parliament. EucA coordinated the editorial selection of photographs, testimonies and audiovisual materials collected during the project, oversaw the graphic design and layout of panels and infographics, and managed the printing of exhibition materials in compliance with the European Parliament's technical requirements. Logistical preparations also included coordination for the transport of materials, on-site set-up, and alignment with the Parliament's services to ensure accessibility, visibility and smooth installation of the exhibition space prior to the opening ceremony. The collaboration with MEP Princi was also crucial to the planning of the roundtable in the European Parliament (day 1, see below). By coordinating with her team, EucA could invite and involve representatives of the Italian Parliament, of the Calabria Region and Italian Ministry of the Interior.

EucA also engaged with the European Committee of the Regions to host the High Level Summit and ensured the involvement of civil society organisations, including organisations working at EU level such as PICUM. EucA also coordinated the engagement of local and regional authorities from Calabria, international students and migrants. These preparatory actions ensured that civil society perspectives and migrant voices

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were fully embedded in the agenda, reflecting the VOICES project's commitment to participatory and inclusive policymaking.

Event activities

Day 1 - 13 January 2026 - Roundtable and Audiovisual Exhibition at the European Parliament

The first day took place at the European Parliament and was hosted by Giusi Princi, Member of the European Parliament. The afternoon opened with the roundtable discussion entitled "**Calabria, leader in integration: the contribution of local administrators to inclusive policies**".

The session was opened by Giusi Princi, Member of the European Parliament, followed by institutional greetings from Giovanni Arruzzolo and Francesco Cannizzaro, Members of the Italian Parliament. Pasquale Cutri, Mayor of Rosarno, delivered a keynote intervention outlining the municipality's long-standing engagement on migration and integration. This was followed by a contribution from Silvio Grieco, Head of Unit for Legal Pathways and Integration at DG HOME, European Commission, who framed local integration policies within the broader EU policy context. Silvia Sassano, Vice-Prefect and Expert on Migration and Asylum Affairs at the Permanent Representation of Italy to the EU, representing the Italian Ministry of the Interior, contributed with an intervention focusing on national coordination and multilevel governance in migration and integration policies.

The roundtable continued with testimonies from Emmanuel Osei, originally from Ghana and now Italian citizen, and Alexandra Florina Calin, originally from Romania and resident in Rosarno, who shared personal experiences of integration at local level. The discussion concluded with an exchange of views involving a representative of the delegation of Calabrian local authorities focusing on challenges, good practices and multilevel cooperation.

The programme featured the inauguration of the audiovisual exhibition "**Rosarno, Capital of Integration: Voices from Migrations for European Inclusive Policies**". The exhibition showcased the stories and results of the VOICES project through the lens of Calabria, and in particular Rosarno and its Plain, highlighting the territory as a space of coexistence, integration, and community-building. Structured in three thematic sections, the exhibition presented Calabria as a crossroads of Mediterranean heritage, Rosarno as a best practice for integration through initiatives such as the Village of Solidarity, and the "Voices from Migrations" editorial project, which transformed personal testimonies into policy-oriented actions.

The exhibition included a total of 52 visual panels combining large-format photographs, written testimonies and infographic content. The first section, dedicated to Calabria as a Mediterranean crossroads, featured landscape and territorial images accompanied by an infographic introducing the region's geography, history and socio-economic context. The second section, focused on Rosarno as a "Capital of Integration", presented photographic panels and infographics illustrating the transformation of the town over time. In recent decades, Rosarno has faced complex social and economic challenges linked to the presence of organised crime and to the structural exploitation of migrant farmworkers in the agricultural sector. For years, migrants lived in informal settlements without access to electricity, clean water or sanitation, working up to twelve hours a day for extremely low wages. Beyond labour exploitation, migrant workers were frequently exposed to violence, intimidation and racist attacks. These conditions culminated in the 2010 uprising, triggered by the shooting of three African workers, which brought international attention to the deep inequalities and systemic neglect affecting migrant communities in Southern Italy. A turning point began in October 2023 with the election of Mayor Pasquale Cutri, marking the start of a new phase focused on legality, transparency and social inclusion. Through the combined efforts of local institutions and civil society organisations, Rosarno has undertaken a path of reconstruction and civic resilience. A key milestone was the inauguration of the Village of Solidarity in 2024, a dignified housing complex for migrant workers, equipped with adequate living facilities and managed under agreed rules. The Village represents a concrete step towards fair agriculture, social justice and sustainable development, positioning Rosarno today as the symbol of courageous transition becoming the new "*Capital of Integration*".

The third section, "*VOICES from Migrations*", placed migrant agency at the centre of the exhibition, addressing one of the root causes of racism: the persistent absence of migrant voices in public narratives. Rather than portraying migrants as passive recipients of aid, this section highlighted them as active subjects

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with complex life stories and experiences. It showcased ten individual testimonies collected in Rosarno, each combining portrait photography, written narratives and QR codes linking to the full digital stories published on the *My House of European History* platform. By connecting personal narratives with a permanent digital archive, the exhibition contributed to restoring migrant agency and ensuring that their voices actively shape education, remembrance and policy debates on integration.

To complement the visual panels, a screen was installed within the exhibition space, looping short subtitled videos of selected testimonies and documenting the fieldwork conducted by international students. Together, the different elements of the exhibition offered visitors an immersive narrative journey connecting personal stories, territorial context and policy outcomes, reinforcing the exhibition's role as both a dissemination tool and a milestone for policy dialogue. Photographs, written stories, infographics and audiovisual content showed migrants' lived experiences and the role of students in collecting testimonies and drafting policy recommendations.

The exhibition was officially opened by MEP Giusi Princi, Member of the European Parliament, and included interventions by Alessandra Luchetti, Head of Department at EACEA, and Alessandra Arcodia, Director for Projects and Advocacy at EuCA, who introduced the exhibition's narrative, objectives and policy relevance, underlining its contribution to awareness-raising and institutional dialogue.

Day 2 - 14 January 2026 - High-level Conference in the European Committee of the Regions

The second day represented the core of the **High Level Summit** and took place at the European Committee of the Regions. The morning opened with a welcome address by Pasquale Cutri, Mayor of Rosarno, followed by a presentation of the VOICES project. Alessandra Criscuolo, Project Officer at the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA), delivered an institutional intervention presenting the CERV programme, its objectives and opportunities, and illustrating, through the example of the VOICES project, funded under CERV, how the programme can concretely support local communities and generate tangible impact at local level.

This was followed by a dedicated session led by international students involved in the project, including Camila Velez Martinez and Fiorella Rodriguez Santos, Boglár Gabriella Kiss and Giuseppe Bellassai. Drawing directly on the migration testimonies and life stories collected during the three VOICES events for students held in 2025, they presented and discussed the policy recommendations on anti-racism and integration that they had drafted throughout the project. The session outlined the participatory process through which personal narratives were transformed into concrete policy proposals, as well as the key thematic priorities identified, demonstrating the active role of young people in shaping policies and the value of testimony-based evidence in local policymaking.

The second part of the morning focused on an exchange of views with local authorities from Calabria, a region where migration is a common and structural phenomenon, giving rise to highly similar challenges across different territories. The discussion highlighted shared needs and concerns and underscored the importance of coordinated action among local authorities to promote integration, as well as a joint commitment to concrete measures, including the development and implementation of the Local Action Plan against Racism and for Integration. The session included interventions by Pasquale Cutri, Mayor of Rosarno; Arturo Lavorato, Councillor of Rosarno; Luca Gaetano, Mayor of San Ferdinando; Simona Scarella, Mayor of Gioia Tauro; Alberto Morano, Mayor of Laureana di Borrello; Antonio Salvatore Carone, Vice-Mayor of San Procopio; Pietro Violi, Mayor of Santa Eufemia d'Aspromonte; Michele Pronesti, Councillor of Melicucco; Caterina Gatto, Mayor of San Pietro di Caridà; Antonino Fiorello, Councillor of Feroleto della Chiesa; Marco Giuseppe Caruso, Mayor of Molochio; Giuseppe Zampogna, Mayor of Scido; Alessandro De Marzo, Mayor of Anoia; Angelo Surace, Mayor of Cosoleto; Giuseppe Papallo, Councillor of Monasterace; Sergio Cannatelli, Mayor of Sorianello; and Sergio Pitiitto, Mayor of Pizzo.

In the afternoon, the Summit continued with a dialogue with the European Commission, civil society and individuals with lived experience of migration. The session was opened by a policy intervention by Tanja Florath, Policy Officer at the Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Racism Coordination Unit, DG JUST, European Commission who outlined the key elements of the EU Anti-Racism Action Plan and referred to the forthcoming European anti-racism strategy. She underlined the strong relevance of the initiative, emphasising that, for the European Commission, the active involvement of local authorities is essential to effectively implement European anti-racism objectives and translate them into concrete action at local level.

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Contributions from civil society and the local community included Michelangelo Rosarno, representative of Associazione OASI; Emmanuel Osei, Alexandra Florina Calin, Maria Francesca Durante, representing the Comprehensive Institute "G. D'Antona" of Acquaro-Soriano Calabro and Chiara Catelli, Advocacy and Project Officer at PICUM. Drawing on their direct experience on the ground in supporting the integration of migrants, as well as on first-hand migrant testimonies, these contributions aimed to provide local authorities with concrete recommendations on actions to be included in the Local Action Plan against Racism and for Integration. The session concluded with a Q&A and closing remarks by Pantelis Chantzaras, Vice-President of EucA.

Day 3 - 15 January 2026 - Closing Ceremony in the Brussels Office of the Calabria Region

The **final day** took place at the Brussels Office of the Calabria Region and focused on a synthesis of the inputs and contributions collected throughout the previous sessions, with the aim of consolidating key elements and priorities to be included in the Local Action Plan against Racism and for Integration. The session opened with a welcoming speech by Mirela Mazalu, Secretary General of EucA.

Alessandra Arcodia, Director for Projects and Advocacy at EucA, presented the overall process and methodology underpinning the development of the Action Plan, highlighting how the different inputs gathered from local authorities, civil society organisations and migrant communities will feed into the drafting of the final text. The session also served to define the follow-up work for the coming month, during which EucA will continue working closely with local authorities to further refine and finalise the Action Plan. The event was attended online by Roberto Occhiuto, President of the Calabria Region, who exchanged views and prospects with the local authorities present to the event. The session closed with remarks from Caterina Romeo and Paweł Pugliese, both working for the Calabria Region Representation in Brussels, and a discussion on implementation and next steps of the project by Pasquale Cutrì, Mayor of Rosarno, reaffirming the municipality's commitment to adopting and implementing the Action Plan in 2026.

Results and impact

The High Level Summit strengthened the link between grassroots testimonies and institutional policymaking by validating the VOICES policy recommendations at political level, reinforcing cooperation between local authorities and EU institutions, and formally advancing the adoption process of the Local Anti-Racism and Integration Action Plan. The event amplified the voices of migrants and young people within European policy spaces and increased the visibility and policy relevance of the VOICES methodology. According to the results of the EucA feedback forms, 90% of participants rated the event 5 out 5. All responders rated 5 out of 5 the chance of bringing their point of views in a high level discussion with civil society, students, migrants, EU officials and local authorities. 95% of participants declared that attending the event increased their understanding about the EU, its values and its institutions.

HISTORY OF CHANGES

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