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**CIVIC**  
COMPETENT INHABITANTS TO VALORISE INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

  
Klinika za psihijatriju Vrapče  
University Psychiatric Hospital Vrapče



  
GEMS  
Northern Ireland

  
EPIONI  
GREEK CARERS NETWORK

SISTEMA SANITARIO REGIONALE  
ASL  
ROMA 2

## The European-funded "CIVIC" project kick off

The Kick – Off Meeting of the CIVIC project took place on December 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020. It was the first international event of this new project supported by the European Erasmus+ programme. ASL Roma 2 is the leader of CIVIC and the project will last two years.

CIVIC "Competent Inhabitants to Valorise Inclusive Communities in EU" is in line with HERO, the previous housing project always coordinated by ASL Roma 2 in the three-year period 2016-2019. HERO results are available in five languages on the website [www.housing-project.eu](http://www.housing-project.eu).

The kick-off meeting, made by videoconference due to the COVID-19 pandemic, was attended by representatives of the partner organizations: from Greece "EPIONI - Greek Carers Network", from Croatia "Klinika za psihijatriju Vrapče", from Portugal "Desincoop – Economic, Social and Cultural CRL De-Development" and from Northern Ireland "GEMS Northern Ireland Limited". Department of Mental Health (DSM) users, as expected, also contributed to its realization by sending three videos specially made and that provided a lively and lived testimony of how housing is thought and realized in our Department of Mental Health (DSM).

In both HERO and CIVIC, "housing" is understood as the development of a system of social structures in a network of human relations in a safe neighborhood. HERO encourages the community-based approach to enable the transition from aid to inclusion. The Sladana Strkalj-Ivezic's (1) recent publication "Mental health as public good. Psychosocial interventions in mental health" [2020 Croatian Institute of Public Health. Zagreb, Croatia] frames the contribution of this type of project within a broader European framework of mental health interventions and The Lancet (2020) by virtue of expiry of the WHO Mental Health Action Plan 2013-2020, reiterated the concept that: "Community empowerment is the way to mental health promotion".

Since October 2018, the Lancet Commission for Global Mental Health and Sustainable Development has drawn the attention of the international scientific community to mental health indicators by proposing their

grouping by areas: (neighborhood, social/cultural environment); systems and services (service availability, access, quality); protection from results and risks.

In 2019, with the Handbook "Quality Rights Material for Training, Guidance and Transformation", the WHO strongly reaffirmed the connection between human rights, community empowerment and mental health.

In CIVIC, consistent with the vision of our DSM, housing is seen both as a guarantee of human rights and as a fundamental part of the recovery path aimed at social inclusion.

The main objectives that CIVIC wants to achieve are as follows:

- Expand and support the dissemination of the Training Curriculum on Housing and Mental Health, for local communities published on the [www.housing-project.eu](http://www.housing-project.eu)
- Develop networks for non-formal learning in housing.
- Identify social and civil skills in housing paths.
- Collect and share solutions for housing problems.

-The sharing of good practices and the training carried out within CIVIC will lead to two specific products:

1. A tutorial to facilitate the use of the HERO Training Curriculum, for local communities.
2. A booklet "What to do in case of ..." that provides ideas, suggestions, solutions for housing.

CIVIC will be implemented through the synergistic work of 5 organizations from 5 EU countries. All organizations have housing experience, are active in the processes of inclusion and protection of rights, participating in national and international networks.

The partnership identified four target groups, representing local communities: 1. users of mental health services and their families, 2. mental health professionals, 3. professionals from other agencies (schools, employment office) 4. citizens (neighbors, volunteers).

40 people from the target groups will be involved by each partner and will make their direct contribution to CIVIC.

Civic therefore continues the DSM's commitment to European Projects and initiatives aimed at developing and improving action on the theme of living.

Through this Newsletter we will update you on the developments of this new project and its path.

*(1) Psychiatrist, Director of the mental health center at the University Psychiatric Hospital of Zagreb, partner in both HERO and CIVIC projects*