

**2021**  
**ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT**  
**OF**  
**SOFIA PLATFORM FOUNDATION**

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The Sofia Platform Foundation was established in 2013. Throughout 2021, the Foundation continued its work in two main directions (objectives) - to promote democratic values in the country and to keep an open discussion about the history of the recent past. The following is non-exhaustive information about the projects the organization has been working on so as attain the two set objectives:

Project title: **Civic education in action**

Activities: Summer schools exploring the history of the totalitarian communist regime, organized in the town of Belene.

Duration: 2017– 2021

In 2021, The Sofia Platform Foundation organized for the third time summer school “Why Should We Remember?” in the town of Belene. The school gathered 25 pupils and students from across the country, who had the opportunity to learn more about the communist totalitarian regime in Bulgaria and discuss topics, such as remembrance, democratic values and the importance of civic activism in a totalitarian government.

Project title: **Civic Europe, capacity building**

Activities: Training of active citizens from across the country, funding projects in the places of residence of the participants, a mentoring program, development of a “Civic Health Index”, Internet platform to help civic education teachers, participation in international conferences.

Duration 2019 – 2022

“Civic Europe” is a two-component program aiming to support ideas, individuals and organizations, based or working in communities outside the big cities. The program aims to build the capacity and skills of these individuals/organizations in order to help them become active participants in public life. A total of 35 participants completed a 5-component training program. The participants who completed the trainings received financial and mentoring support. As a result - a total of 28 projects have been implemented on a local level.

The “Civic Health Index” sociological survey was completed in 2021. The results and reports will be published in 2022.

The team of the Sofia Platform Foundation has developed a learning platform (the Platform) to support teachers of civic education for the 11th and 12th grade. The Platform equips the teachers with an algorithm to create lesson plans in line with the official Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) curriculum and to fill these lesson plans with interactive teaching methods and exercises/tasks for the students. Three (3) webinars were held to promote the Platform. More than 200 teachers from across the country joined. There are 480 users registered in the Platform as of March 2022.

Within the frames of the project, the team of the Sofia Platform Foundation took part in 13 international events and conferences during the reporting year 2021.

Project title: **Civic Europe, mapping and research**

Activities: Conducting a survey among 183 civic actors, data analysis, issuing recommendations, creating an informative video, taking part in international conference, creating visual identity for the project

Duration: 2020 – 2022

Mapping and survey are standalone activities within the frames of the larger “Civic Europe” program. They aim to identify and collect information about civic actors in 4 regions of Europe - the so-called “Civic deserts” in Bulgaria, Poland, Romania and Hungary. A survey among 183 civic actors in the 4 regions took place in the reporting year 2021. The team of the Sofia Platform Foundation has analyzed the data from the surveys and formulated recommendations for the civic sector in Central and Eastern Europe in order to improve civic life. A short informative video was created to illustrate the basic information about the project in order to promote it, as well as a visual identity (logo) of the project.

The team of the Sofia Platform Foundation took part in the international conference mottoed “Berlin Conference 2021 - Europe bottom-up!”, where the project was presented.

Project title: **Civic Europe, Idea Challenge**

Activities: Distribution of information about the competition through various channels, meetings with potential candidates.

Duration: 2021

Idea Challenge is a competition for ideas, managed by MiOst e.V, within the frames of the “Civic Europe” Program. The Sofia Platform Foundation was the local Scouting Partner for Bulgaria in 2021. The Foundation on the one part helped the distribution of the information in the country of the competition and, on the other, assisted the candidate organizations by interpreting the rules and process of application and by providing advice on specific issues with regard to a specific project idea. A total of 124 organizations from Bulgaria applied for the competition, one Bulgarian project out of a total of 18 projects was approved for funding under the program.

Project title: **Local Democracy Lab, PaCE**

Activities: Organization and holding a public discussion, preparation of a report with findings.

Duration: 2021

The Sofia Platform Foundation in cooperation with Democratic Society, Reykjavik, and Citizens Foundation organized a Democracy Lab - a public discussion on the state of democracy through the lens of the coronavirus pandemic under the Populism and Civic Engagement (PaCE) Project. The event was held in the town of Belene on 3 July 2021. The key findings of the discussion are summarized in a report in Bulgarian and English available here - <http://sofiaplatform.org/bg/doklad-laboratoria-za-demokracia/>.

Project title: **Mapping civic education in Europe**

Activities: Creating on-line questionnaires, translation of the questionnaires in Bulgarian, building a database of local contacts, promotion of the project information, communication with target groups by e-mail and by phone.

Duration: 2021– 2022

The project involves a survey of people and organizations in up to 20 countries working in the field of civic education, aiming to identify the topics they work on, their organizational needs, as well as their interaction with other people and organizations in the field. The project is implemented by THE



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CIVICS Innovation Hub in partnership with organizations in each of the mapped out countries. The Sofia Platform Foundation has been the local partner in the project for Bulgaria.

Project title: **Video classes on Civic Education for the 12th grade**

Activities: Creating video classes on Civic Education for the 12th grade.

Duration: 2021 - 2022

Jointly with the Representative Office of the European Commission in Bulgaria and ucha.se, the Sofia Platform Foundation created video classes based on the curriculum approved by MoES on Civic Education for the 12th grade. The material covered in a total of 33 video classes corresponds to the knowledge, skills and competences, which should be acquired while studying the subject as set by MoES. The classes are hosted on the learning platform ucha.se and can be watched completely free of charge after registration on the website (<https://ucha.se/videos/grazhdansko-obrazovanie/11-klas/>). A test with fifteen questions has been developed for each text.

Project title: **Lawyers helping teachers in Civic Education**

Activities: Developing a Civic Education handbook with lessons suitable for teaching in partnership between lawyers and teachers, training of a pilot group of lawyers to assist the teachers, national approbation of the developed lessons.

Duration: 2020 – 2022

Further to the relations established with the legal team at DXC Technology Bulgaria in 2021, the Sofia Platform Foundation together with Street Law Inc. continued the implementation of a project aimed to involve lawyers as assistant to teachers in CE in the study of topics from the curriculum that are fully or partially legal in nature. Street Law Inc. is an organization based in Georgetown, USA, that has been working for more than three decades in the field of CE with a focus on legal culture and democratic government. A training for lawyers and teachers was held in 2021 in five towns across the country with follow-up work to build the lawyer-teacher teams. Field work is to start in 2022 with visits by lawyers in Civic Education classes.

Project title: **Stand-up comedy: Made in EU**

Activities: Organizing and holding three stand-up comedy shows in the country dedicated to European topics.

Duration: 2021

As part of a project supported by the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Sofia, the Sofia Platform Foundation organized a series of three stand-up comedy shows “Made in EU” in Sofia, Burgas and Montana. The performer in the comedy shows was Inside Joke Stand-up Comedy - a stand-up comedy club in Bulgaria. The project aimed to encourage the debate on important European topics and demonstrate EU’s contribution to life in the EU Member States.

Project title: **Transition Dialogue 2019-2021. Dealing with change in democratic ways.**

Activities: Coordination, communication with partners, developing resources and study materials, creating a video tour dedicated to the transition in Bulgaria, participation in the editing process and



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design of publications, organization and holding meetings, participation in regional and international seminars to present the project and other public relations.

Duration: 2019 – 2022

As part of the coordination team and in accordance with the partnership agreement, the Sofia Platform Foundation continued its support for the implementation of the Transition Dialogue project in 2021. Members of the team took part in the organization and holding of meetings and liaised as a point of contact and support for selected partners on both administrative and content issues.

Many of the coordination activities in 2021 focused on the development of a history and civic education handbook, which is to be published in the spring of 2022.

In 2021, we produced and posted the video “In the footsteps of a revolution (the whole tour)”, available here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ik9J0Zb7Tnk&list=PLf\\_Lx3IDPtE3Lpgbo4K0\\_p-4E5T3\\_e7U6yj&ab\\_channel=SofiaPlatform](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ik9J0Zb7Tnk&list=PLf_Lx3IDPtE3Lpgbo4K0_p-4E5T3_e7U6yj&ab_channel=SofiaPlatform).

The team also participated in a number of national and international on-line and off-line events, such as the national conference at NBU and the Fifth International Symposium “Education 21” at the University of Veliko Tarnovo.

Project title: **Erasmus + projects: "Back to School" and "School 4.0"**.

Duration: 2019 – 2022

The projects are dedicated to developing study materials for the so-called “hard-to-reach learners” (in the part “Back to School” and their transformation into interactive on-line modules (in the Part “School 4.0”). The materials developed in 2021 focused on the following topics: Role and responsibilities of citizens, European societies and culture, equality, discrimination, the EU as a global actor, as well as methodological approach to teaching the topics to the so-called “hard-to-reach learners”. An on-line platform is currently being developed where the materials will be published.

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