II Meeting Report

“Reclaim Europe!”

Author: Roberto Falanga
Workshop e conferência
7 de novembro 2018
9h30-17h30 (workshop fechado)
18h00-20h30 (conferência pública)
Biblioteca de Marvila
Rua António Cedeira, 1950-347 Lisboa

1. WORKSHOP
Inscrição:

9h30-10h00
Boas-vindas e introdução

Boas-vindas
Christine Auer (Fundação Friedrich Ebert, Lisboa)
Ségaline Puvour
(European Alternatives, Paris)

Introdução: “Reclam Europe”
— o que aconteceu até este ponto e para onde queremos ir? —
Roberto Falanga (Investigador de Pós-doutoramento, ICSUL, Lisboa)

10h00-10h30
Atividade de aprimoramento
Arnebert Rodrigues (GTO LX, Lisboa)

10h30-11h30
Sessões de formação paralelas

a) A arte de organizar comunidades de esperança
Como mobilizar a Europa através da narração pública das nossas histórias políticas
Formador: Georg Blokus (Schule der politischen Hoffnung, Colômbia)
Ana Batão: Luísa Mendes (Movimento Morar em Lisboa, Lisboa)

b) Cidade – para quem? – Ações para reivindicar o direito à cidade
Como podem os grupos marginalizados e silenciados reivindicar o uso do espaço público e os direitos à cidade? Como podem mobilizar para ação? Como se pode ultrapassar os conaminamentos e como se pode tomar as lutas transnacionais e europeias?
Kenga Stančuk (Partido Razem, Vanuvici)
António Brito Guterres (DINÂMICA CEFUL, Lisboa)
Antónia Silvestre (Cazalaboro, Covilhã)

11h30-11h45
Almoço

14h00-15h00
Sessões de informação paralelas

a) Defesa de causas na UE
Ana Sofia Ferrandes (Plataforma Portuguesa para os Direitos das Mulheres / European Women’s Lobby, Lisboa)

b) Processos legislativos na UE
Susana Correia (Transparência e Integridade, Lisboa)

c) Apoios e candidaturas a fundos europeus destinados a organizações da sociedade civil
Domingos Lopes (Programa Operacional Inclusão Social e Emprego, Fundo Social Europeu, Lisboa)

15h00-17h00
O “plano de ação” — como concretizá-lo?
Quais as reivindicações debatidas nos primeiros encontros do “Reclam Europe” que queremos continuar a elaborar e como? Quais os obstáculos para os pôr em prática?

17h00-17h30
Encerramento do workshop e transição para a conferência
Feedback
Follow up

17h30-18h00
Coffee break

2. CONFERÊNCIA
Inscrição:

18h00-19h30
Debate em mesa redonda
“Reclam Europe – das reivindicações às ações”
Aos participantes, tomam posição em relação às reivindicações e ideias mais relevantes do “plano de ação” e discutem-nas.

Participantes:
Ana Sofia Ferrandes (Plataforma Portuguesa para os Direitos das Mulheres / European Women’s Lobby, Lisboa)
Caterina Marchena (Assembleia da República, Lisboa)
José Manuel Parez (Assembleia da República, Lisboa)
Federico Alagna (Cembiamento Massima da Basso, Messina)
Maria José Domingos (Rede DLUC / Rede Europa Anti-Pobreza, Lisboa)

Moderador:
Roberto Falanga (Investigador de Pós-doutoramento, ICSUL, Lisboa)

19h30-20h30
Teatro-Fórum “Fel e Mel no Papel”
Teatro-Fórum pelo GTO LX (Teatro do Quimido Lisboa) e AMI AFO
Tópicos: Imigração, identidade cultural, racismo.

Organizado por
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Teatro-fórum:
www.fes-portugal.org www.eurowalter.com

Poster

ENTRADA LIVRE, MAS PODE SER INSCRIÇÃO PRÉVIA PARA AMBOS OS EVENTOS ATÉ DIA 4 DE NOVEMBRO 2018.
O número de lugares disponíveis para o workshop é limitado.
A conferência decorrerá em inglês e português (com tradução simultânea).

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Executive summary

This Mid-term Report aims to provide an overview of the key lessons learned in the second meeting of the project “Reclaim Europe!” led by Friedrich Ebert Stiftung with grassroots groups, associations and movements (hereinafter CSO, Civil Society Organisations) in Portugal. The meeting gathered 56 participants, some representatives from CSOs, activists, scholars, practitioners, and members of international organisations.

The meeting took place on the 7th of November 2018, and was structured in order to provide training and information sessions to support literacy on participation of CSOs in decision-making and debate the “Action Plan” produced in the first meeting of the project on the 14th of July 2018. The first meeting gathered 18 representatives from CSOs (16 from Lisbon and 2 from Porto), who discussed the main topic of the day in three working groups organised around: (i) public space and mobility; (ii) gender, migration, and art; (iii) housing.

This Mid-term Report first provides full description of goals and methodology of the meeting. Secondly, it presents the Action Plan co-created in the first meeting. Thirdly, it presents the main ideas shared by the participants in the working groups organised during the day. Finally, the Report discusses the results of the meeting and opens to further exploration of some key issues emerged from the two meetings.
Goals and methodology of the meeting

The project “Reclaim Europe!” aims at fostering bottom-up participation of CSOs in Portugal. This goal is pursued in the light of the recent massive transformations in Europe, which may hinder opportunities to voicing into decision-making. More broadly, the project addresses the most contentious issues that supranational policymaking is required to effectively respond in local governance: how to ensure that the voice of the most marginalised sectors of civil society is heard by European institutions?

CSOs are broadly acknowledged as the key agents of intermediation between local populations and supranational agencies. Given their role, the second meeting of the project aimed to provide training and information sessions to support literacy on participation of CSOs in decision-making and explore the “Action Plan” co-created in the first meeting with a group of 18 CSOs representing multiple policy fields of action.

The meeting took place on the 7th of November in Lisbon in the Marvila Library, the most recent and biggest municipal library of the city. The location was chosen in consideration of the ground-breaking role played by the library as social and cultural catalyser in the urban area. Despite being geographically central, Marvila has been rather characterised by phenomena of segregation and marginalisation. While Lisbon shows impressive growth of public and private investment in local economy, the area and in particular its social neighbourhoods have been kept at the margins of these trends.

The programme of the meeting was structured as follows:

- 9 – 10 am: Welcome Session
- 10 – 10.30 am: Morning Activity led by Anabela Rodrigues
- 10.30 am – 1pm: Parallel Training Sessions
- 2 – 2.15 pm: Energising Exercise led by Segolene Pruvot
- 2.15 – 3 pm: Information Sessions
- 3 – 4.15 pm: Working Groups
- 4.15 – 5.30 pm: Plenary Session
- 6 – 7.30 pm: Round Table
- 7.30 – 8.30 pm: Theatre Session led by Anabela Rodrigues

The coordination of the meeting was mandated to Christine Auer (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung) and Segolene Pruvot (European Alternatives), while Roberto Falanga coordinated the working groups and the round table in the afternoon.
The “Action Plan”: Reclaiming (what) Europe?

The second meeting of the project “Reclaim Europe!” aimed to gather representatives from CSOs to debate on their experiences on both local and international actions and initiatives. Unlike the first meeting, the goal was twofold: on the one hand to provide training on specific issues; on the other, to deepen and broaden the scope of the Action Plan co-created in the first meeting, which was organised into three main areas: (i) Governance in Europe: how to democratize decision-making?; (ii) International networking: how to ensure capacity building for everybody?; (iii) International funding: how to facilitate access and transparency?

Each area relied on key inputs shared from the first meetings, listed below:

**Governance in Europe**

- European institutions still pass through national governments, while some countries like Portugal would take more advantage from a more direct management of funding (e.g. via regional bodies).
- European institutions are now seeking to fund initiatives in Eastern European countries, more than Southern Europe. This shift compromises Portugal, which is a peripheral country that needs international acknowledgment to make things work internally.
- Considering the democratic deficit in Europe, there is need for broader debate upon what Europe we want and how it can effectively fund grassroots actions and initiatives.
- More often than not, European policies are guided by political agendas that define in advance the issues of interest, thus biasing genuine bottom-up processes of policymaking.
- Top-down approaches are disguised by the rhetoric of participation, which incorporates legalistic languages and bureaucratic procedures that hinder real citizen engagement.
- International debates lack intersectionality, and do not provide the needed complexity to both agenda setting and policy solutions. New approaches are needed to approach the complex matches and mismatches of claims emerging from civil society.
- Lack of transparency in European policymaking may be either a political strategy or related to the complexity of managing a huge and diverse context that, according to some, motivates easier access of big networks and lobbies.
- Lack of continuity and sustainability of policies creates great distance between European institutions and local contexts.
- Focus on metropolitan cities should not shadow smaller towns and rural contexts, as proved by the lack of accountability on funds addressed to the interior of Portugal.
International Networking

- Although European institutions declare to open the doors to all, claims are rarely made by the most in-need sectors of civil society, while powerful lobbies have more frequently voice into decision-making.
- Participation is biased because there are not adequate tools for those who have not enough resources. This generates frustration and distrust towards European institutions.
- Excessive bureaucracy further hinders the participation of medium/small CSOs that often lack knowhow to have an impact at the international level.
- Self-representation is needed to be more effective in claiming rights to European institutions.
- Self-representation can be organised through formal groups as well as via movements, and whatever the form of organisation, there should be greater access to European decision-making.
- Despite the emphasis on participation, not only self-representation is limited, as the scale of action is too large for disadvantaged sectors of civil society.

International funding

- European funding is much more concerned with international mobility than with the sustainability of actions and initiatives led by CSOs.
- European funding inherently limits the application by all CSOs because of its legalist language and bureaucratic apparatus.
- Applying to international funding has become a profession and this is not fair for democracy because it encourages the hyper-specialization of some in detriment of communities.

Working groups and roundtable

Working groups were organised to discuss the three main areas according to a common plan:

**Step 1: Which topic do you want to work on? Choose a group**

**Step 2 (15 minutes): What concrete action / objective do you want to work on? Choose 1 to work with**

**Step 3 (45 minutes): How to concretize the action? Discuss on and answer the following questions that you will also find on your table**

- Question 1: How will it be realised?
- Question 2: How should the success of this action be measured? (Indicator)
- Question 3: Who will be in charge of its realisation and whom will it be for?
• Question 4: When will it be realised? In 5, 20, 50 years?

Step 4 (45 minutes): What do you think of the other action plan contributions? Come back to the auditory, share and discuss your results with the other groups in a plenary session.

Following the working groups, national and international experts have been invited to discuss some of the main issues emerged from the meeting. The round-table was composed of the following speakers, who were invited to explore issues that aimed to merge the debate of the plenary. They are listed below according to the order of presentation:

• José Manuel Pureza, Deputy for the Left Bloc and Vice-President to the Assembly of the Republic of Portugal, also Professor of International Relations at the University of Coimbra and researcher at the Centre of Social Studies.
• Federico Alagna, activist of the municipalist movement Cambiamo Messina dal Basso (CMdB), from the city of Messina, Sicily (Italy).
• Maria José Domingos, sociologist and representative of the EAPN Portugal / European Anti-Poverty Network in the local network of public and private organisations “DLBC” in Lisbon.
• Catarina Marcelino, former secretary of the state in the area of citizenship and equality and member of the local council of Montijo.
• Ana Sofia Fernandes, Vice President of the European Women’s Lobby, Secretary-General of the Portuguese Platform for Women’s Rights and Advisor at the Portuguese Economic and Social Council.
Issues emerging from working groups and roundtable

Following the structure and plan described above, the working groups discussed the three main areas identified in the “Action Plan”.

- With regard to “Governance in Europe”, participants argue that it is necessary to improve citizen literacy on democracy and democratic institutions. This goal should be pursued by providing adequate information, education, and training to civil society. Social campaigns can be an effective tool, as proved by those on recycling. Social campaigns should address all and in particular younger generations. In a horizon of six years for this change, special attention should be paid on those youngsters that will be eighteen years old in 2024 and, thus, with right to vote in political elections.

Along with social campaigns, there is need to create and/or improve existing communication channels between political representatives and citizens. Towards this aim, information should be more accessible to all, which requires avoiding technocratic language, as well as greater attention to be paid on the relation between Europe and local contexts. Mechanisms of citizen participation in policymaking represent an effective option to connect state, European Commission, and civil society through a wide array of communication channels implemented at multiple levels.

Last, and more broadly, governance in Europe should rely on more effective strategies of communication and participation, with the inclusion of organized and non-organised citizens that should be informed and trained. These strategies need time to be sustained through the next years and decades. Long-term strategies are more likely to guarantee greater changes and impacts, which should be monitored and evaluated accordingly. Towards this aim, European institutions should provide themselves with economic resources to keep strategies working through different political mandates.

- As to the “International Networking”, participants argue the need to first identify and map which groups and networks exist in Europe. This goal should be pursued by means of open calls to contributions from self-organised organisations in the social networks (e.g. Facebook). This strategy should be implemented in a timespan of five years and should be able to catch quantitative and qualitative information from member states on the current state of the art of international networking.

Along with the abovementioned preliminary action, international networking should rely on broader initiatives of information and training on the impacts of European policies. Towards this end, it is necessary to involve organised citizens in member states and constitute both formal and informal networks which should take forward consistent work
of advocacy with political institutions. By providing citizens with conceptual and practical information, existing lobbies should be questioned about their role and power in defense of real interests and the ways through which different layers of problems/solutions are being envisioned. The creation of new networks should ensure that the most vulnerable groups of civil society are represented.

- As finally concerns “International Funding”, a first goal to pursue should be to provide local authorities with economic subsidies to fund citizen initiatives. Funding should rely on open calls managed by local authorities according to identified areas of intervention. Organised citizens and non-governmental organisations at large should be free to compete for funding every four years.

Along with this first goal, participants further suggest to strengthen public commitment of local authorities with local communities. A new social pact is needed and recurring public consultations can provide the necessary mechanisms to extend the debate on political strategies, measures, and policies.

Last, funding should rely on local sponsors that, consistent to previous actions, should open calls for the allocation of economic resources to private and public organisations. Local authorities should supervise the process and guarantee that public interests are met every five years.

The issues emerged through the working groups and debated with participants during the plenary were used to formulate specific questions to the speakers invited to the roundtable.

- José Manuel Pureza was invited to explore the reasons why we should reclaim Europe, and which Europe. Accordingly, he argued that there are different forms to approach “Europe”, and it is necessary to understand which is the Europe that citizens are reclaiming. More broadly, the idea of Europe relies on the social contract among citizens. Member states joined the European Union with expectation of economic growth and social justice. However, decrease of both is leading to make people feel disaffected from the real Europe and reclaim its original idea and promises. Reclaiming Europe means reclaiming those rights that Europe should be able to guarantee. Towards this aim, Europeanist attitudes risk to compromise greater understanding and problematisation of the achievements. Yet, it is fundamental to acknowledge and distinguish the institutions that are supposed to regulate citizen rights. For example, the Council of Europe was mandated since its foundation to assure that human rights are defended in Europe.

- Federico Alagna was invited to explore the issues of cities in reclaiming Europe. Accordingly, he argued that along with the right to the city, there should be a right to
Europe to be reclaimed by society. Both rights should be assumed, defended and promoted by citizens and not only by institutions. Activism is, therefore, a reasonable indicator of change of our societies. The localist movement around the world emerges in response to spreading feelings of disappointment and frustration with the status quo. In the last 6 years several attempts to make this movement grow from spontaneous mobilisations and protests to the government have been made. The successful experience of Messina proves that this growth is possible and that local autonomy can be defended from within the institutions as well.

- **Maria José Domingos** was invited to explore the role of local networks and their contribution to reclaim Europe. Accordingly, she argued that several grassroots groups and networks have emerged in the last few years, and some of them also produce meta-understanding on the work made local and national organisations. The European Anti-Poverty Network was created to design a common strategy to combat poverty in member states. This goal is worth pursuing in that poverty should be called with its name rather than social exclusion, marginalisation, and the like. Likewise, other concepts are being increasingly adopted to disguise the attention on this problem, such as cross-cutting emphasis given to entrepreneurship and self-employed jobs. Starting from the local scale is fundamental to achieve this goal, and the democratisation of decision-making is a necessary means.

- **Caterina Marcelino** was invited to explore issues concerning the role of the national government in reclaiming Europe. Accordingly, she argued that there is need to have more Europe in order to expand democratic rights and extend them to all. More Europe does not necessarily mean more local scale, and critical attention should be paid on the ways through which subsidiarity is actually displayed in member states. Some public policies should not be managed by local authorities only, because they barely have expertise and know-how on international issues like the current refugees’ crisis.

- Finally, **Ana Sofia Fernandes** was invited to tell something about how unexperienced citizens can influence decisions at the European level, and the role of lobbies. Accordingly, she argued that the self-organisation of civil society creates lobbies that are expected to defend specific interests. Lobbies work in certain sectors and towards aims that can promote visible and tangible improvements for citizens, as in the case of women. However, it is necessary to clarify that gender equality is no merely about ensuring equal access to labour market and politics. Democracy, more broadly, should guarantee cultural change that is reflected in the ways institutions work. For example, strategic frameworks compromise needed actions of monitoring and evaluations, and the current articulation between first and second level commissioners in the European Commission should be reviewed.
Conclusions

The meeting provided a complex overview on both local and international claims that should be addressed to reclaim Europe. Bearing in mind the key issues spotted in the first meeting, together with the topics discussed about the three main areas identified in the “Action Plan”, and the inputs provided by the speakers in the round-table, some key lessons can be learned.

- **Governance in Europe** needs to rely on improved literacy on which democracy (and which Europe) we want to build in the future. As pinpointed in the first meeting, the democratic deficit in Europe needs to be faced by broadening the debate upon what Europe we want and how it can effectively fund grassroots actions and initiatives. This claim requires serious reflection on the tools (and communication channels) that can be made available to enhance accessible information and adequate training. Mechanisms of citizen participation can represent an effective opportunity to (re)connect European Commission, member states, local authorities and civil society. However, critical attention should be paid on who (and how) is actually provided with needed conditions to participate. Said otherwise, civil society should be approached by tackling its complex, controversial, and often unjust dynamics within. In some cases, as pointed out in the first meeting, top-down approaches are disguised by the rhetoric of participation, which incorporates legalistic languages and bureaucratic procedures that hinder real citizen engagement. New approaches are needed to approach the complex matches and mismatches of claims emerging from civil society. Along with that, European institutions should commit themselves with adequate funding provided to keep the initiatives working, monitored, and evaluated. Indeed, as already mentioned in the first meeting, the lack of sustainability compromises the relation between European institutions and local contexts.

- **International Networking** needs to rely on existing experiences of grassroots groups and networks in order to identify what is working, what is not working and why. The improvement of either formal and informal international networking should create the necessary conditions to inform and train citizens on the opportunities and impacts of European policies. Special attention should be paid on the effective engagement of the most vulnerable groups of civil society, as also claimed in the first meeting. In order to decrease the power of existing lobbies into decision-making, medium/small CSOs as well as self-represented citizens need to have access to decision-making.

- **International Funding** needs to provide local authorities and groups with needed economic resources. The distribution and allocation of public funding should be organised through systematic open calls for organised citizens and non-governmental organisations. According to what emerged in the first meeting, applying to international
funding has become a profession and this is not fair for democracy because it encourages the hyper-specialization of some in detriment of communities. Therefore, a new social pact is needed and public consultations can represent an available instrument of making the debate more consistent.

Summing up, participants in the second meeting point out that there is a “transnational” space that can be occupied by emerging claims of democracy, as clearly argued by Pureza. CSOs and non-organised citizens reclaim stronger links between Europe and local contexts, through new forms of networking that ensure wider participation and more transparent mechanisms of funding. Local contexts can provide the necessary inputs to rethink European policies against risk of isolation, marginalisation, and poverty, as stressed by Domingos and Alagna. These goals should rely on a profound rethinking of the European institutions, as pointed out by Fernandes, and, more broadly, the role of the state as appointed by Marcelino. Participants finally praised the necessity to strengthen further this debate and possibly inspire the organisation of similar meetings outside main cities in order to allow both urban and rural contexts to be represented when addressing local scale.