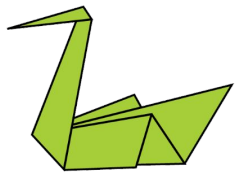


Vijeće  
građana  
Rijeke





# Citizens' Assembly of Rijeka Croatian Debut



žmergo

Helena Traub  
Association Žmergo

# Rijeka 2020 – European Capital of Culture

- ECC concept has foreseen as a crucial part of legacy:

empowered local communities,  
strong neighborhoods

capable and prepared

to step in and change the City  
and its energy.



# Port of Diversity

Rijeka was daring and implemented a very unusual ECC in comparison to other municipalities.

Avantguard, bold, industrial...

But, you never know what can bring you, surprisingly, to the green pastures.



-

# The Citizens' Assembly of Rijeka (CAR)

The Citizens' Assembly of Rijeka was initiated by the City of Rijeka.

It is prepared and coordinated by the Association for Civil Society Development SMART.

The financial support is provided by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation.

It provides a good example of how the Croatian perception and practice of citizens' participation is changing.



# Q&A

**The question with which the Mayor challenged the citizens is:**

- **How can the City of Rijeka improve the system of community-level self-government and enhance citizen participation in the development of the local community?**
- 34 randomly selected citizens (Population: 107.964 / 18+: 92.937 )

# The tasks of the Assembly

Familiarize themselves with the system of local self-government and ways of citizen participation in the development of the local community, both in theory and practice.

Consider and discuss how to improve the system of community-level self-government and increase citizen participation in the development of the local community.

Collaboratively draft and adopt proposals and recommendations for measures that the City of Rijeka should take to enhance the system of community-level self-government and increase citizen participation in the development of the local community.

# The tasks of the Assembly

## **The positive elements of this experiment are:**

- involvement of “ordinary” citizens, rather than of the activist élite;
- orientation to the future in a transversal approach, not bound by the usual “sectoral” policies.

## **The weaknesses of the experiment are:**

- merely consultative role, with no obligations assumed by the City to follow-up;
- budgetary issues “missing in action”.



# Submissions and consultations

- Online consultations with:
  - elected representatives in local board councils
  - local board councils secretaries
  - other civil servants
  - associations and civic initiatives
  - citizens

# A Citizens' Assembly

is a group of people selected from the general population to deliberate on important public questions so as to exert an influence. Citizens' assembly can be a form of direct democracy if all voters are part of the assembly.

A CA uses elements of a jury to create public policy. Through skilled facilitation, the assembly members weigh trade-offs and work to find common ground on a shared set of recommendations. Citizens' assemblies can be more representative and deliberative than public engagement, polls, legislatures or ballot initiatives. They seek quality of participation over quantity.

# CA meetings – A brief overview

- What will we do and how will we do it?
- Introduction to the system of local self-government (lectures, presentations and discussions)
- Introduction to the citizen participation in decision-making and examples of good practice (lectures, presentations and discussions)
- Talks and consultations with elected representatives in local board councils, local board secretaries, heads of city departments and other civil servants, associations and civic initiatives
- Recommendations drafting (small groups and discussions)
- Adoption of the recommendations
- Submission of the recommendations to the Mayor



# Opening of the VGR, what will we do and how will we do it?





# Introduction to the system of local self-government (lectures, presentations and discussions)



# Introduction to the citizen participation in decision-making and examples of good practice (lectures, presentations and discussions)





# Ongoing

Talks and consultations with:

- elected representatives in local board councils,
- local board secretaries,
- heads of city departments and other civil servants,
- associations and civic initiatives

# CAR



An impulse to the rest of Croatia.

# Thank you!

- Helena Traub
- [helena@zmergo.hr](mailto:helena@zmergo.hr)

<https://vijecegradanarijeke.org/>

<https://www.facebook.com/VijecegradanaRijeke>



