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Ist year SEVE

Internship Experience at Europe Direct Iasi

During my internship at Europe Direct Iasi, I had the privilege of engaging in two impactful activities that not only broadened my understanding of European institutions and cultural citizenship but also inspired me to seek future collaborations with this esteemed organization. Europe Direct Iași is one of the Europe Direct Centers that help bring the European Union closer to people on the ground and help facilitate their participation in debates on the future of the EU. The centre answers questions about EU policies, programmes and priorities and is ready to proactively engage with citizens and stakeholders so that they feel more involved in the European project. In this presentation, I will outline my experiences and reflections on these two activities, highlighting their significance in fostering European awareness and cultural engagement among the youth.

Activity 1: “Europa ta, drepturile tale” at Vasile Alecsandri High School

One of the key activities I participated in during my internship was a workshop about Europe and citizen rights, mainly related to the future European elections. We had a special guest, Model European Union Iasi (MEU) initiator Andreea Șerban, who is now working in an European institution. This activity aimed to introduce students to the legislative processes of the European Union and encourage their active participation in similar events. My role, along with other interns, was to provide a brief overview of each EU institution, shedding light on their functions and significance.

I remember the enthusiasm among the high schoolers as they engaged with the concept of the EU and its institutions. Many expressed interest in pursuing paths that would enable them to contribute to European affairs. I had the opportunity to share my academic journey as requested after the event ended by two of the students, that I was studying Political Science and currently pursuing a Master's degree at the Center of European Studies at Alexandru Ioan Cuza University, Faculty of Law. The students were eager to learn about educational pathways that could lead

them to similar pursuits, reflecting their genuine curiosity and aspiration to be actively involved in European affairs.

Activity 2: Youth Power II at “Miron Costin” Theoretical Highschool

The second activity I participated in focused on the intersection of art, politics, and environmental activism within the EU context. We welcomed two guests from Artipic, an organization dedicated to using art, particularly street art, as a tool for social change. Their mission resonated deeply with the high schoolers as they shared inspiring stories of how they raised awareness and empowered marginalized communities through artistic expression, particularly in Dalas, a very poor neighbourhood in Iasi.

The students were captivated by the guests' accounts and the transformative power of art in advocating for environmental protection and cultural citizenship. As part of the activity, the students were tasked with identifying 14 qualities related to cultural European citizenship. Their engagement was remarkable, demonstrating a keen understanding of the subject matter and a readiness to contribute meaningfully to the discussion. My contribution to this event was having to read the manual called “Art in democracy” and to ask relevant questions and make them think about the implications of art in democracy. They were very easy to collaborate with because of their genuine interest and I think the whole workshop was a success.

Activity 3: Comparative study of 6 Europe Direct Centers

Undertaking a comparative study of Europe Direct Centers across Romania has been an enlightening experience, providing me with valuable insights into the diverse purposes, approaches, and activities of these centers. Through this analysis, I have gained a deeper understanding of the role that Europe Direct Centers play in promoting EU awareness, facilitating citizen engagement, and fostering regional cooperation.

By examining the differences between various Europe Direct Centers, I have come to appreciate the nuanced ways in which these centers cater to the specific needs and interests of their respective regions. Each center's unique purpose, social media presence, and focus areas reflect the distinct priorities and challenges faced by different communities across Romania.

Moreover, this comparative study has highlighted the importance of context and local dynamics in shaping the operations and outreach efforts of Europe Direct Centers. From the bustling

capital of Bucharest to the historic city of Sibiu, each center tailors its activities and initiatives to suit the socio-economic, cultural, and political landscape of its region.

Through this comparative analysis, I have gained a holistic perspective on the role of Europe Direct Centers in promoting European integration, fostering dialogue, and empowering citizens to actively participate in EU affairs. Moving forward, this understanding will inform my appreciation for the diversity and complexity of EU-related initiatives at the local and regional levels, and inspire me to contribute to European citizenship and cooperation in meaningful ways.

Comparative Analysis of 6 Europe Direct Centers in Romania

1. Europe Direct Bucharest

Purpose: Europe Direct Bucharest serves as a centralized information hub for EU-related matters in the capital city. Its primary purpose is to provide Romanian citizens with access to accurate and timely information about EU policies, programs, and opportunities. Additionally, it aims to promote dialogue and engagement on European issues through various events, workshops, and outreach activities.

Social Media Presence: On social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, Europe Direct Bucharest maintains an active presence, regularly sharing updates about EU news, events, and initiatives. It engages with its audience through informative posts, interactive polls, and live sessions, fostering a sense of community and encouraging participation.

Differences: As the largest and most centrally located Europe Direct Center in Romania, Europe Direct Bucharest may have a wider reach and more resources compared to other centers. It may also have a broader scope of activities and events due to its location in the capital city.

2. Europe Direct Cluj

Purpose: Europe Direct Cluj serves the citizens of Cluj-Napoca and surrounding regions, aiming to provide information and promote dialogue on EU-related topics. It focuses on facilitating access to EU resources, fostering European citizenship, and encouraging active participation in European affairs among local residents.

Social Media Presence: On social media platforms, Europe Direct Cluj maintains an active presence, sharing information about EU initiatives, local events, and opportunities for citizen

engagement. It interacts with its audience through engaging content, including videos, infographics, and quizzes, to educate and inspire community members.

Differences: Europe Direct Cluj may tailor its activities and outreach efforts to suit the specific needs and interests of the residents in its region. It may also collaborate closely with local organizations, universities, and authorities to address regional priorities and promote EU integration at the local level.

3. Europe Direct Timișoara

Purpose: Europe Direct Timișoara serves as a resource center for EU information and engagement in the western region of Romania. It aims to empower citizens with knowledge about EU policies and initiatives, facilitate access to EU funding opportunities, and promote active citizenship and European values.

Social Media Presence: On social media platforms, Europe Direct Timișoara maintains an active presence, sharing updates about EU news, events, and projects relevant to the local community. It engages with its audience through informative posts, interactive polls, and user-generated content, fostering a sense of belonging and encouraging participation.

Differences: Europe Direct Timișoara may focus on issues and priorities specific to the western region of Romania, such as cross-border cooperation, economic development, and cultural exchange with neighboring countries. It may also collaborate with local stakeholders, including universities, businesses, and civil society organizations, to address regional challenges and opportunities.

4. Europe Direct Iași

Purpose: Europe Direct Iași serves as a knowledge center for EU-related matters in the northeastern region of Romania, including the city of Iași and surrounding areas. It aims to provide citizens with access to EU information, promote dialogue and awareness on European issues, and facilitate participation in EU programs and initiatives.

Social Media Presence: On social media platforms, Europe Direct Iași maintains an active presence, sharing updates about EU news, events, and activities organized by the center. It engages with its audience through informative posts, live streams, and interactive Q&A sessions, encouraging community members to ask questions and participate in discussions.

Differences: Europe Direct Iași may focus on promoting EU initiatives and opportunities that are particularly relevant to the northeastern region of Romania, such as regional development

projects, cultural exchanges, and educational programs. It may also collaborate with local institutions, NGOs, and media outlets to amplify its reach and impact within the local community.

5. Europe Direct Râșnov

Purpose: Europe Direct Râșnov serves as a focal point for EU-related information and engagement in the central region of Romania, including the town of Râșnov and Cristian and neighboring areas. Its primary purpose is to provide citizens with access to EU resources, promote awareness and understanding of European policies and values, and encourage active participation in EU initiatives.

Social Media Presence: On social media platforms, Europe Direct Râșnov maintains an active presence, sharing updates about EU news, events, and opportunities for citizen engagement. It interacts with its audience through informative posts, engaging visuals, and user-generated content, fostering a sense of community and encouraging dialogue on European issues.

Differences: Europe Direct Râșnov may focus on addressing regional priorities and challenges, such as sustainable tourism, rural development, and environmental protection, in collaboration with local stakeholders and authorities. It may also organize outreach activities and workshops tailored to the interests and needs of the local community.

6. Europe Direct Sudul Olteniei - Craiova

Purpose: Europe Direct Sudul Olteniei -Craiova serves as a knowledge center for EU-related matters in the southwestern region of Romania, including the city of Craiova and surrounding areas. It aims to provide citizens with access to EU information, promote dialogue and awareness on European issues, and facilitate participation in EU programs and initiatives.

Social Media Presence: On social media platforms, Europe Direct Sudul Olteniei - Craiova maintains an active presence, sharing updates about EU news, events, and activities organized by the center. It engages with its audience through informative posts, live streams, and interactive Q&A sessions, encouraging community members to ask questions and participate in discussions.

Differences: Europe Direct Sudul Olteniei - Craiova may focus on promoting EU initiatives and opportunities that are particularly relevant to the southwestern region of Romania, such as regional development projects, agricultural policies, and cultural exchanges. It may also collaborate with local institutions, NGOs, and media outlets to amplify its reach and impact within the local community.

Conclusion: Reflections and Future Collaborations

My internship experience at Europe Direct Iasi has been immensely rewarding, providing me with valuable insights into European affairs and cultural citizenship. The activities I participated in not only fostered dialogue and awareness but also inspired a sense of responsibility and agency among the youth: using their right to vote, being informed about their opportunities as an European citizen and also in pursuing a political career, fighting for the less fortunate and raising awareness.

As I reflect on my time at Europe Direct, I am filled with a sense of gratitude for the opportunity to contribute to such meaningful initiatives. The experience has instilled in me a desire for future collaborations with Europe Direct, with the hope of continuing to engage and inspire the youth to become active participants in shaping the future of Europe.

In conclusion, my internship at Europe Direct Iasi has been a transformative journey, reinforcing my passion for European affairs and cultural engagement. I am confident that the lessons learned and connections made during this experience, especially with my practice tutor Ioana Pruteanu, will continue to guide me in my future endeavors, both academically and professionally.