

EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

(To be filled in and uploaded as deliverable in the Portal Grant Management System, at the due date foreseen in the system.

 *Please provide one sheet per event (one event = one workpackage = one lump sum).)*

PROJECT	
Participant:	[Red Cross of Serbia] (RCS)
PIC number:	974802471
Project name and acronym:	Age Against the Machine – European Solidarity Network for Older Citizens Rights

EVENT DESCRIPTION			
Event number:	[WP12]		
Event name:	[FINAL CONFERENCE – AGE AGAINST THE MACHINE]		
Type:	[conference]		
In situ/online:	[in-situ]		
Location:	[Serbia], [Belgrade]		
Date(s):	[09.12.2025]		
Website(s) (if any):	https://www.redcross.org.rs/en/news/final-conference-of-the-age-against-the-machine-project-theatre-as-a-tool-to-combat-ageism/		
Participants			
Female:	90		
Male:	15		
Non-binary:			
From country 1 Denmark[1		
From country 2 Italy	2		
From country 3 Poland	1		
From country 4 Portugal	1		
From country 5 Serbia	100		
Total number of participants:	105	From total number of countries:	5
Description			
<i>Provide a short description of the event and its activities.</i>			

FINAL CONFERENCE – AGE AGAINST THE MACHINE (BELGRADE, SERBIA)

Final Conference of the *Age Against the Machine – European Solidarity Network for Older Citizens' Rights* Project
(Belgrade, Serbia)

The Final Conference of the *Age Against the Machine – European Solidarity Network for Older Citizens' Rights* project was held in Belgrade at the premises of the Red Cross of Serbia as the concluding event of the CERV – Network of Towns project. The conference marked the end of project activities and provided an opportunity to present results, reflect on the project process, and discuss further use of participatory and community-based approaches to addressing ageism.



The conference brought together project partners from Serbia, Portugal, Italy, Poland, and Denmark, along with civil society organisations, cultural professionals, representatives of public institutions, older persons, and members of the general public. The event enabled exchange between partners and participants and supported discussion on practical ways to raise awareness of ageism and strengthen intergenerational understanding at community level.

The event opened with welcoming remarks by representatives of the Red Cross of Serbia, the Novi Sad – European Capital of Culture Foundation, and the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights. The opening session framed ageism as a common and often overlooked form of discrimination and highlighted the importance of cooperation between civil society, cultural actors, and public institutions in addressing its social consequences.

A central part of the programme was dedicated to the presentation of project results. Representatives of the coordinating and partner organisations presented key achievements of the *Age Against the Machine* initiative, including research-related insights on ageism and experiences from intergenerational theatre productions, festivals, public actions, and participatory artistic activities implemented in partner countries. The presentation highlighted how thematic areas such as health, care, gender equality, media representation, and social participation were addressed through artistic processes adapted to local contexts.

As part of this session, partners presented findings from the assessment of attitudes toward ageism using an instrument aligned with the **WHO Ageism Scale**, which measures ageism across emotional, cognitive, and social-distance dimensions. Attitudes were measured before and after five theatre performances using both short and extended versions of the questionnaire. The assessment aimed to explore correlations rather than establish causality. Results showed consistent shifts in audience responses after the performances, particularly in the emotional and social-distance domains. For example, agreement with statements such as “older people are a burden” decreased from **38% before the performance to 22% after**, while agreement with perceptions that older people “cannot adapt to change” declined from **55% to 39%**. These changes were more pronounced in emotional responses than in more stable cognitive attitudes, reflecting the finding that empathy tends to shift

faster than rational beliefs. Similar patterns were observed among participants directly involved in the performances, indicating that participation in the creative process was also associated with reflection on age-related stereotypes. Taken together, these findings support the view that participatory and theatre-based approaches can function as a useful advocacy tool for raising awareness of ageism and fostering dialogue at community level.



Following the results presentation, a panel discussion entitled *“From Idea to Practice: Results, Challenges and Partners’ Recommendations”* brought together representatives of all partner organisations. The discussion focused on the creative and organisational processes behind the theatre productions, with partners reflecting on how initial ideas were translated into performances through collaboration with participants from local communities and how approaches were adapted to different cultural and social contexts.

A key part of the panel discussion addressed the practical and personal challenges encountered during the development of the plays. Partners described difficulties in reaching and engaging community members as actors, particularly those with no prior experience in theatre, as well as the time and effort required to build trust within intergenerational groups. Participants also reflected on recognising and questioning their own biases and internalised age-related stereotypes, both as facilitators and as performers, and on how this self-reflection became an integral part of the creative process.

Partners from Portugal and Poland specifically highlighted challenges related to stage presence, stage fright, and feelings of vulnerability connected to public performance and body exposure on stage. At the same time, the discussion underlined positive outcomes of the process, particularly the strong community bonds formed between participants of different generations. Being involved in the performances was described as a meaningful and fulfilling activity that helped participants reduce feelings of social isolation and loneliness, while allowing them to contribute to something they perceived as socially relevant. Overcoming personal fears and performing together strengthened mutual support, confidence, and a sense of belonging within the groups.



The subsequent session focused on methodology. Partners presented the applied approach combining participatory research, intergenerational collaboration, and theatre-based methods, and discussed how these approaches can be used beyond the project in community work, education, and advocacy related to ageism.

The final substantive session focused on the presentation of project recommendations and plans for future advocacy activities. Drawing on experiences from all five partner countries, partners highlighted how ageism continues to influence public policies, access to services, and resource allocation, often in structural ways. Key themes included long-term care, gender inequalities over the life course, media representation of older persons, digital exclusion, mental health, and community-based support. The discussion also addressed how the recommendations can support continued dialogue with stakeholders and guide future joint advocacy beyond the project.

The conference concluded with a discussion and a short interactive exercise involving participants. This was followed by the official opening of the exhibition **"Stop Violence Against Older People"**, developed by Verena Schriebl, Kerstin Erlacher, and Elisabeth Margreiter as part of activities supported by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Labour, Health, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection. Through visual storytelling, the exhibition highlighted the experiences of older persons affected by violence and neglect and encouraged reflection on prevention and social responsibility. An informal networking reception followed, allowing for further exchange among participants.

The Final Conference confirmed the relevance of participatory and creative approaches in addressing ageism and violence against older persons, highlighting their contribution to communal and societal engagement, intergenerational connection, and more inclusive attitudes toward ageing in everyday social and community life.

The entire event was live streamed via the official Red Cross of Serbia Facebook account, enabling wider public access and engagement beyond in-person participants.

<https://www.facebook.com/share/v/1DnY5d198q/>



COMMUNICATION REGARDING FESTIVAL:

<https://www.rts.rs/radio/radio-beograd-1/5846540/nasilje-nad-starijim-osobama-je-krivicno-delo.html>

DIGITAL:

<https://www.facebook.com/share/v/1XNPssf4XT/>

<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1CyY85Gn7w/>

<https://www.facebook.com/share/v/1DnY5d198q/> (live stream)

<https://www.breadoflife.org.rs/Vesti.html#vest091220251>

https://www.instagram.com/p/DSHbfpMiNz0/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

<https://x.com/UNFPASerbia/status/1998337037850570971?s=20>

Overall Digital Performance

- **Post Engagement:** 416
- **Reach:** 3,335
- **Impressions:** 7,798

HISTORY OF CHANGES		
VERSION	PUBLICATION DATE	CHANGE
1.0	01.04.2022	Initial version (new MFF).