**European Elections 2014 Project**

This document summarizes the tools that we applied with the aim to support projects that amplify the voice and demands of constituencies that are far from the centers of power, fight all types of hate speech, and mobilize voters to take part in this rare political moment of transnational democracy.

Grant making was the primary tool used to activate civil society across Europe to promote a scenario of further integration and strengthening of open society values. We only provided organizational grants within this body of work and tried out different approaches, namely an open call, targeted mobilization efforts, a video competition and post-election efforts. Moreover, whilst having a dedicated European Elections 2014 Project budget and team this was a flagship project for OSIFE to which other thematic clusters and their projects contributed to as well.

We did not engage in outright advocacy ourselves but instead focused on providing additional support to our grantees in grantee meetings that included capacity building sessions, particularly around communications, messaging and use of social media. Together with the OSF Office for Communications OSIFE developed a comprehensive communication strategy to accompany the work of our grantees, promoted the mobilization of EU citizens living in other EU countries, and explored ideas for the immediate post-election moment.

We commissioned research that underpinned our communication campaign timetovote.eu, the only piece of work in which OSIFE in close cooperation with the OSF Office for Communications got more directly involved in the voter mobilization efforts, particularly targeting EU migrants. Moreover, we commissioned a post-election study to understand the reasons behind voter behavior and voter attitudes towards the European Union.

We also worked closely together with other OSF programs in Europe, particularly the Open Society European Policy Institute (OSEPI) and the Think Tank Fund (TTF) as OSIFE administered a joint research fund with them, and collaborated with the Roma Initiatives Office (RIO) on exchanging good practices and contacts in the area of voter mobilization and empowerment. We facilitated regular monthly phone calls in order to coordinate our work and we also organized a joint post-election strategy meeting in mid-April 2014.

Finally, we coordinated our work internally through weekly project team meetings and developed communication tools like the weekly updates that helped us keep track of all the projects.

ORGANIZATIONAL GRANTS

The attached Annex I document shows the list of all elections-related grants that OSIFE had supported. A total of 90 grants worth USD 5,710,334.54, of which 69 grants worth USD 4,418,707.54 were processed by the EE14 project team and additional 21 grants worth USD 1,291,627.00 from other clusters and some as co-funding or legacies from other OSF programs.

GRANTEE MEETINGS

We convened the grantees during the first half of the project cycle to strategize collectively about maximizing the impact of their individual projects and to learn from each other’s’ experiences. This also entailed bringing in external experts on political messaging and mobilization to advise the groups on their strategies before the electoral campaigns went into full swing in the spring of 2014. Based on the amount of grantees, we had several grantee meetings clustered around a joint theme.

The five grantee meetings shared the same general objectives:

* Offer a platform for exchange and networking between grantees;
* Identify possible synergies among different projects;
* Encourage cooperation and understand better their planned activities;
* Present the available OSF communication tools to help amplify the grantees’ work;
* Discuss and exchange views on the broader picture of European elections and different national context and perceptions on the ground as seen by grantees.

Here is a list of dates, venues and themes of each the five grantee meetings:

* 16-18 February 2014: *Voter Mobilization and Empowerment* in Barcelona (OSIFE)
* 2-4 March 2014: *Monitoring Hate Speech and Naming and Shaming* in Budapest (OSI)
* 16-18 March: *Engaging Youth and others on the ‘Periphery of Power’* in Barcelona (OSIFE)
* 26-28 March: *Boosting voter mobilization of Europeans abroad and in low voter turnout countries* in Barcelona (OSIFE)
* 6-8 April: *Promoting Transparency in Europe: Using the European Elections to Increase Accountability* in Brussels (OSEPI)

COMMUNICATION with GRANTEES

To advance the work of grantees, foster exchange of good practices and keep a close eye on their numerous activities outside the regular reporting mechanisms such as the interim reports, we created a secret Facebook group and established a weekly update (April – June 2014), followed by monthly updates (July – December 2014) in the form of a PDF document summarizing the latest developments with regards to the EE14 project (see a sample attached as Annex II).

PUBLIC COMMUNICATION

Dedicated [project page on the OSF website](http://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/projects/european-parliament-elections-2014) was created, where voice-pieces by OSF staff and grantees had been published and plenty of elections-related images were produced to help spark interest in the issues discussed, particularly aimed at participation and role of elections in democracy.

Jointly with the OSF Office for Communications OSIFE developed and invested in a communication campaign to motivate EU migrants to make use of their right to vote. The [Time to Vote](http://timetovote.eu/) campaign, which was informed by Greenberg research testing different messages on specific target groups, was implemented by Saatchi & Saatchi Poland as an online campaign. Some key figures of the communication efforts were:

* Views of TimetoVote.eu Video message: 160,554
* Total exposure to TimetoVote.eu message: 18,000,000
* OSF Facebook Campaign Reach: 3,179,740
* OSF Twitter Campaign Reach: 453,855
* Total traffic to European Elections 2014 content on OSF website: 23,578
* Most popular article: [What Do the Results of the European Elections Mean for Open Society?](http://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/voices/what-do-results-european-elections-mean-open-society); total traffic: 8,901

INTERNAL PROCESES

Given the complexity of this project, the numerous stakeholders within and outside OSF and the vast interest in the European elections from our funder George Soros himself as well as the OSIFE Advisory Board, it was key that we set up processes and regular channels of communication to advance our own work. This was done firstly at the level of the EE14 project team that had regular weekly meetings each Monday morning. At the level of OSF entities working in Europe and involved in the project this was achieved through monthly phone calls, a dedicated [European Elections community](https://karl.soros.org/communities/european-elections/) on KARL, as well as an in-person post-election strategy meeting in mid-April in Barcelona. Furthermore, the work on this portfolio of work was presented and reported to the OSIFE Advisory Board in their February and July meetings.