

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	
Project name and acronym:	Sound of Diversity – Network of Towns
Participant:	Connection:Berlin e.V.
PIC number:	886847624

EVENT DESCRIPTION	
Event number:	5
Event name:	VIRTUAL ROUNDTABLE: DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT
Type:	workshop, key note, panel, World Cafe'
In situ/online:	on line
Location:	on line
Date(s):	22.01.2026 and 27.03.2026
Website(s) (if any):	<u>Sound of Diversity – Oficjalny serwis internetowy Aleksandrowa Łódzkiego</u>
Participants	
Female:	76
Male:	24
Non-binary:	2
From country 1 [Slovenia]:	11
From country 2 [Poland]:	15
From country 3 [France]:	6
From country 4 [Germany]:	13

From country 5 [Greece]:	2		
From country 6 [Italy]	10		
From country 7 [Serbia]	4		
From country 8 [Czech Republic]:	4		
From country 9 [Portugal]	5		
From country 10 [Romania]	10		
From country 11 [Croatia]	5		
From country 12 [Hungary]	5		
From country 13 [Belgium]	1		
From country 14 [Spain]	5		
From country 15 [Albania]	3		
From country 16 [Slovakia]	2		
From country 17 [Sweden]	1		
Total number of participants:	101	From total number of countries:	17
From country 18 [Georgia]	1		
From country 19 [Cambodia]	1		
Total number of participants:	103	From total number of countries:	19
Description			
<i>Provide a short description of the event and its activities.</i>			
1. Target groups:			
City practitioners, civil society organizations, cultural activists, local activists, youth, ethnic and national minorities, community members, local actors, LGBTQI, organizers of community events, policy makers.			
2. Description of the event and its activities/ context.			
Connection:Berlin e.V. hosted the “Virtual Roundtable Diversity Management” taking place online on 22 January and 27 March 2026. This event, being a part of the Sound of Diversity Network of Towns, continued the exploration of diversity, equality, and inclusion across European contexts.			

Whereas the first part of the SoD Virtual Roundtable, in January, was more of an internal training (by the keynote speaker) and a workshop dedicated to the SoD Guidebook, the second part in March was open to external public, and it brought together municipal practitioners, civil society actors, and grassroots initiatives from 17 countries to examine how diversity is translated into everyday practice. The discussion moved between institutional frameworks and independent civic action, highlighting both synergies and tensions between top-down and bottom-up approaches. Participants engaged in a panel exchange focused on local strategies, advocacy, and cultural work that foster inclusion and protect human rights. The programme also included an interactive World-Café format dedicated to youth engagement, removing structural barriers through accessible approaches, and strengthening media and communication strategies. The event aimed to encourage cross-sectoral learning, deepen cooperation within the Sound of Diversity network, and inspire new forms of collaboration across partnered towns and cities in Europe.

3. Agenda of the event.

Part 1 in January

22 January 2026

Programme highlights (10:00–11:30 CET)

- Welcome – Tomasz Barszcz & Gosia Wochowska
- Keynote – Mirca Lotz - a Berlin-based speaker on music and arts initiatives in the context of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- Sound of Diversity in 2025 – key takeaways and outcomes

Partners-only session (11:45–13:00 CET)

- Workshop on the SoD Guidebook – Eliza Gaust, DEI expert supporting SoD
- Practical matters and upcoming events

Part 2 in March

27 March 2026

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ByoZ1yljAlu88XNF8QI08xjEE3CtMnla/view?usp=sharing>

AGENDA	10:15 - 10:35 KEYNOTE ANU RITZ Policy Officer at the European Commission, Coordinator of the European Network of Diversity Charters
	10:35 - 10:50 SOUND OF DIVERSITY PRESENTATION Facilitated by Gosia Wochowska, Project Manager of Sound of Diversity, Co-founder of connection:berlin
	10:50 - 11:00 SHORT BREAK
	11:00 - 12:00 PANEL PRACTITIONERS IN CONVERSATION: How Diversity Takes Shape Locally with: Federico Batista Poitier, Viktória Radványi, Leonid Mauch and Jelena Silajdžić. Moderated by Joanna Kopacka, connection:berlin
	11:30 - 12:20 FAQ with the Panelists
	12:20 - 12:30 SHORT BREAK
	12:30 - 13:00 WORLDCAFÉ / NETWORKING with: IncoMolfetta (Italy), Društvo za kulturo inkluzije (Slovenia), MediaPont (Serbia)
	connection:berlin

4. Main take aways/ findings from the event

January

This session was primarily planned for the SoD project partners and close stakeholders. It was supposed to provide an opportunity to reflect on our collective achievements in 2025, exchange perspectives, and look ahead to upcoming activities within the Sound of Diversity network.

In the first part of the meeting (10:00–11:30 CET) we offered a concise overview of the past year and highlighted key outcomes and shared successes, and asked the hosts of the past events to take the floor to present what they hold the most important in this regard. (1 h)

Secondly, we were joined by a keynote speaker – **Mirca Lotz**, who is a Berlin-based speaker on music and arts initiatives in the context of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, a cofounder of the Safe the Dance initiative who gave us plenty of practical insights on how to make festivals and community events more inclusive and welcoming. (1 h)

The event then was moderated by **Eliza Gaust**, who is the expert supporting SoD partners in DEI, and who led a working session on the SoD Guidebook (1 h). The guidebook documents the practices, insights, and tools developed throughout the project - both during the organisation of transnational meetings and in the everyday work of local teams, who often combined hosting SoD activities with running their regular festivals. The Guidebook is meant as something that will truly present good practices from across Europe, focusing on how public institutions organise local community events with diversity in mind, and therefore its elaboration has been an ongoing process throughout the project.

March:

Opening session

In this opening session, we set the scene for our discussion on how diversity, equality, and inclusion are advanced across Europe. The first block explored the interplay between public policy initiatives and independent grassroots action, examining where they converge, where they differ, and how they can reinforce one another.

Our guest speaker was Anu Ritz, a Policy Officer at the European Commission, who coordinates the European network of Diversity Charters - voluntary initiatives that promote inclusive and diverse workplaces and societies. She is also involved in organising the European Diversity Month and the European Capitals of Inclusion and Diversity Award, bringing valuable insight into both policy frameworks and practical implementation across Member States. In this session we also showed the Sound of Diversity Network of Town's vision and mission as a bottom up action aligned with the EU initiatives on diversity, followed by other examples and opportunities in this regard for local authorities and NGOs across Europe.

Link to Anu Ritz's presentation:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/116yFDvMKHdSzptwUWI099-8wGOM4VFO/view?usp=drive_link

In this first session we also made a review of SoD 2025 events, and presented an outline of 2026 activities.

Link to SoD presentation

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1sfulPav2XOp9NqSsh9is2962CjzFIMuS/view?usp=drive_link

Panel

During the panel discussion, the focus shifted from the European institutional framework for advancing diversity, equity and inclusion, and its application within the Sound of Diversity project, to a broader discussion on the diverse strategies and models of diversity work at the local level. The session featured practitioners working on human rights and inclusion in municipalities, offering insights grounded in their respective contexts.

Each speaker represented a distinct model of action. Jelena Silajdžić (Slovo 21, Czechia) shared her organisation's work with Prague's Roma community, emphasising the use of cultural heritage and artistic expression, particularly through the Khamoro World Roma Festival, as tools to foster dialogue with the majority population. She also pointed to the importance of support from the City of Prague in enabling such initiatives, while noting the overall limitations of municipal resources for diversity work. In this context, she emphasised the need for continuous reinvention and the creation of long-term engagement pathways, particularly for young people.

Viktória Radványi (Budapest Pride, Hungary) invited the audience behind the scenes of one of the largest city-wide events advocating for LGBTQIA+ rights in Central Eastern Europe, which evolved into a broader platform for civil society mobilisation in response to democratic backsliding. She discussed the role of the city council in helping to circumvent government-imposed restrictions on Pride assemblies, as well as the different ways activists engage municipal authorities in advancing inclusive policies and defending the rights of all citizens.

Federico Batista Poitier (UN CRPD Expert) offered a structural perspective on strengthening collaboration between civil society and local governments. He highlighted the importance of establishing issue-driven coalitions and strengthening public advocacy capacities, and shared insights from his work on implementing the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In this context, he stressed the need for data collection, cross-sectoral cooperation, and a holistic approach to fostering meaningful equality across all areas of municipal governance.

Leonid Mauch (Diversity Arts Culture, Germany) introduced a further model for advancing diversity, drawing on the example of Berlin's Diversity Arts Culture initiative. Funded by the city, the initiative benefits from direct access to public resources and administration, while also remaining vulnerable to shifting political priorities and funding allocations. He reflected on this tension and shared practical lessons and advice for establishing similar initiatives in other local contexts.

Overall, the panel combined theoretical reflection with practical knowledge transfer, illustrating how different strategies can be translated into concrete local action. It brought together perspectives across scales, from international frameworks to sector-specific municipal initiatives, cultural programmes, and grassroots activism, while also reflecting diverse regional contexts and target groups, including Roma communities, LGBTQIA+ individuals, persons with disabilities, and artists from marginalised communities.

World Cafe

In this World Café session, participants engaged in three parallel breakout rooms, each exploring a distinct facet of how diversity, equality, and inclusion are put into practice across different contexts and communities in Europe. Beyond the thematic discussions, the session provided a valuable space for networking, allowing participants to connect, exchange experiences, and forge new partnerships across borders.

The first breakout room focused on youth engagement, presented by **InCo Molfetta** from Italy. This session examined how young people can be meaningfully involved in shaping inclusive communities, exploring approaches to empower youth voices, foster active participation, and build bridges between generations and institutions.

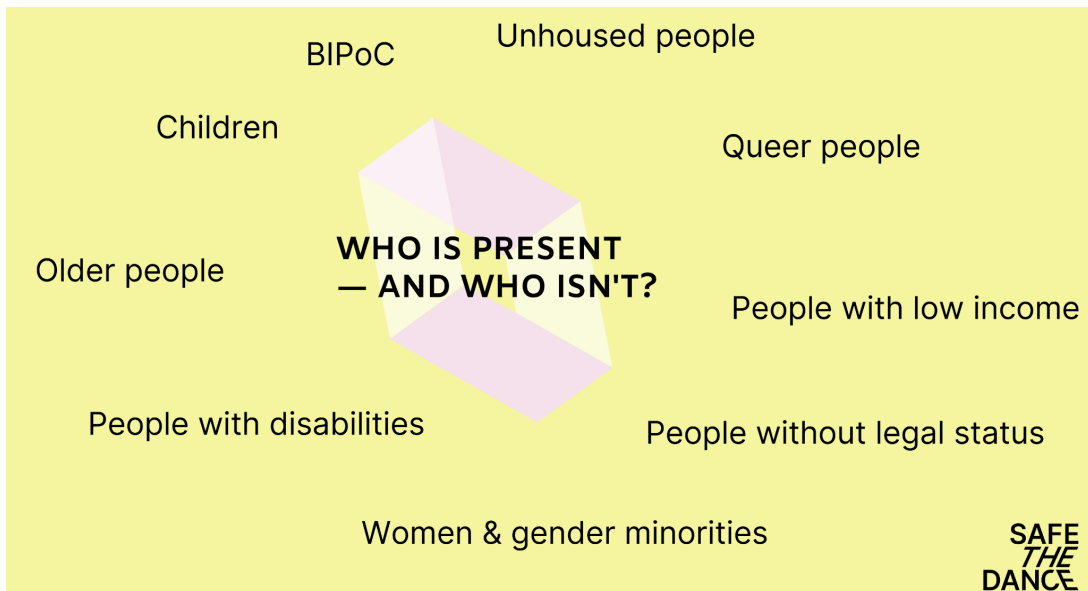
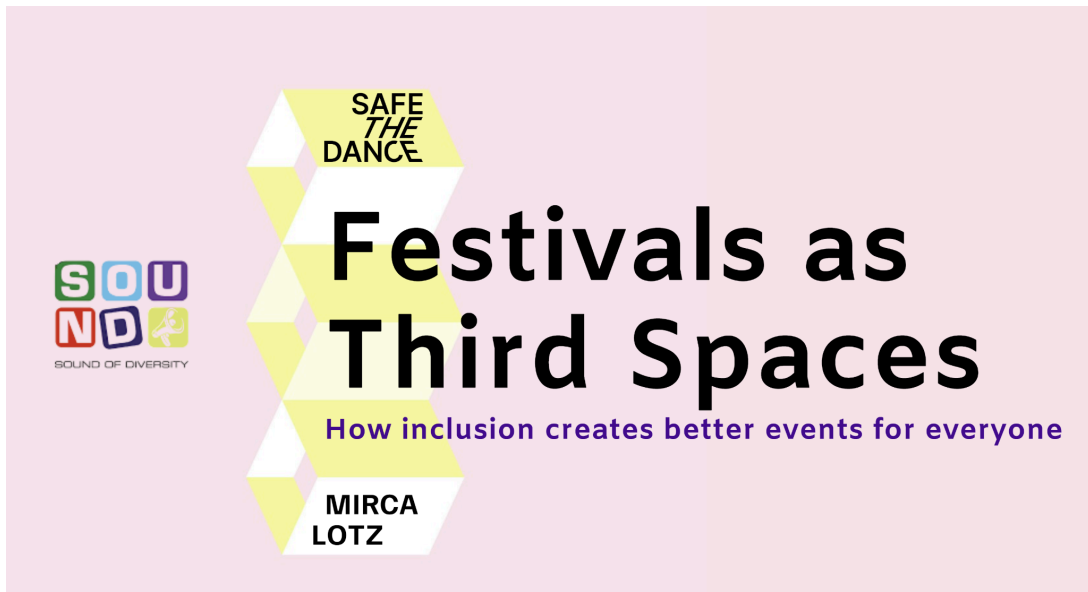
The second breakout room addressed accessibility and inclusion, led by the **Play with Me Festival** from Slovenia. This session explored how cultural and artistic initiatives can serve as powerful tools for breaking down barriers, creating spaces where people of all abilities can participate, connect, and be visible on equal terms.

The third breakout room turned to accessibility in the media, featuring **Media Pont** from Serbia. This session examined the role of media in either perpetuating or dismantling exclusionary narratives, discussing how accessible and representative media practices can shift public perception and ensure that diverse voices reach broader audiences. Across all three rooms, particular attention was given to the diversity of languages in media, recognising that linguistic inclusion is essential for ensuring that information, culture, and public discourse truly reach and reflect all communities.

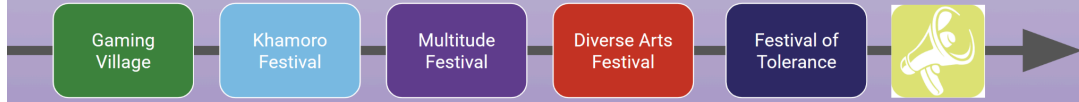
Graphical elements and photos of the event

January

Mirca Lotz's presentation:



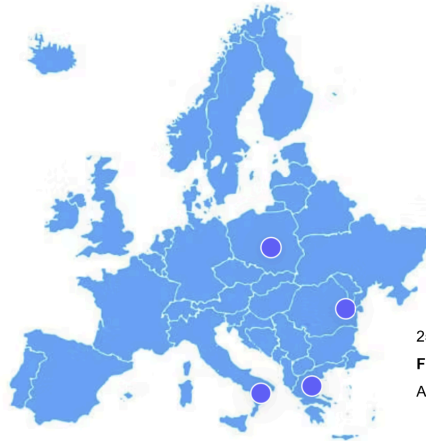
Achievements Sound of Diversity 2025 -
Key takeaways and outcomes



Sound of Diversity

What is coming up in 2026

International events



15 - 17 May 2026, Bârlad (România)
Unity in Diversity: **The Bârlad Experience**

3 - 5 July 2026, Aleksandrów Łódzki (Poland)
Rocking for Change: Environmental Activism.

21 - 23 August 2026, Kileler (Greece)
Traditional Rhythms, Modern Narratives in Europe:
Dance Fest in Kileler

25 - 27 September 2026, Molfetta (Italy)
Festival of Peoples: Bridging Cultures & Environmental Awareness

Nov. 2026, online, connection:berlin (Germany)
Virtual Policy Forum on EU Policies & Diversity Management

March

EUROPE FOR DIVERSITY

Between political initiatives & independent actions
Virtual Roundtable: Diversity Management



Online event, 27. March 26, 10:00 - 13.00 CET

Open to the public, Registration obligatory

Online event hosted by

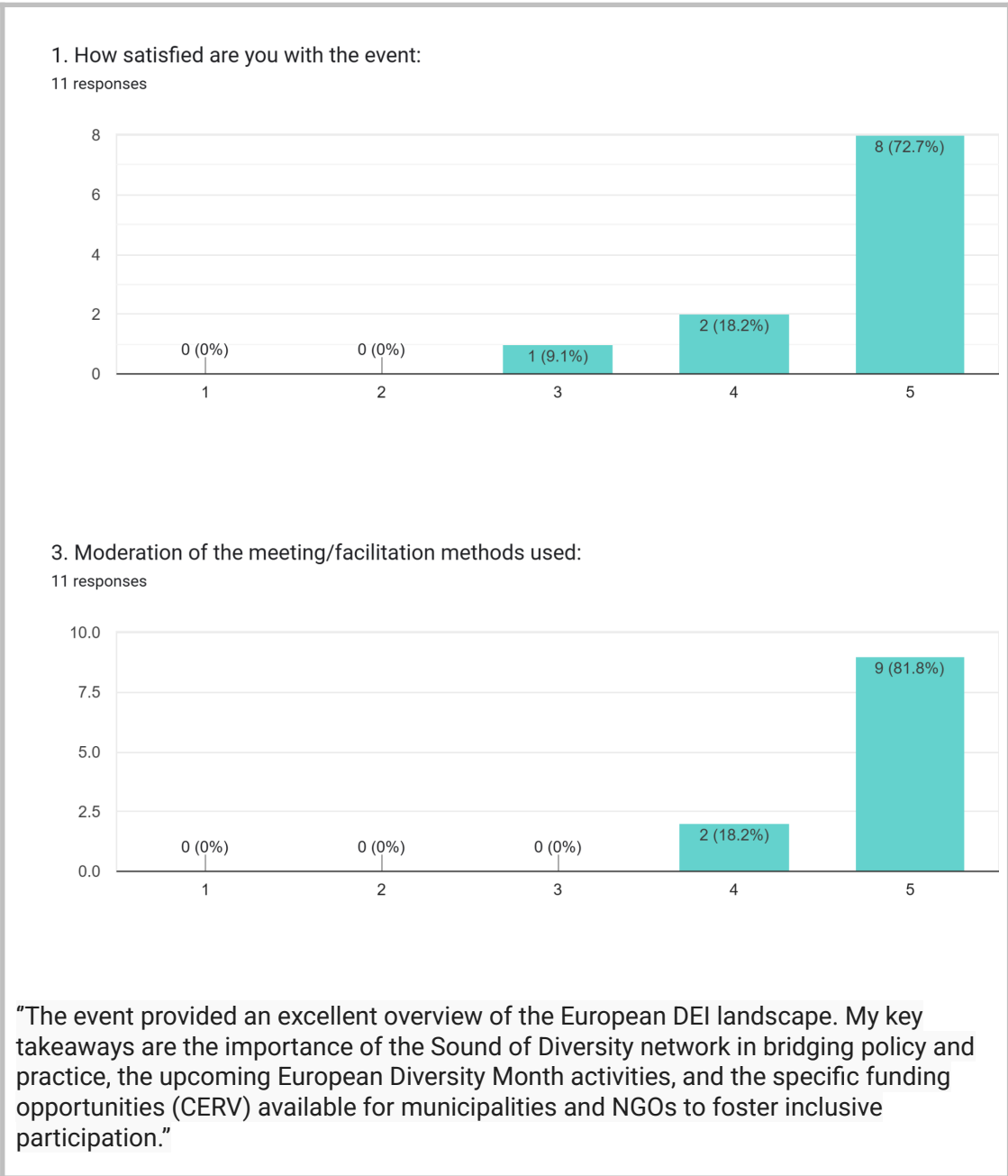
connection:berlin

If there were one thing your town could do better to make diversity a lived reality, what would it be?

- health and social services deisgned to respond to citizens' diverse needs and problems
- Engage better the migrant, non-native speaker communities
- Show sincere support (not politically based) to inclusion and diversity
- To have an immigration service office
- They could engage more with the community and see real situations and issues
- More lively multicultural events for broad public with wide publicity
- To know more about the residents of my town
- Funding art by marginalised artists through a separate fund
- Inclusive strategy in Diversity and draft action plans based in this strategy.
- More public dialogue about the topic
- create intentionally more inclusive spaces to make space for people with
- Gove placees free for NGOs active in this field



Feedback from the participants



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