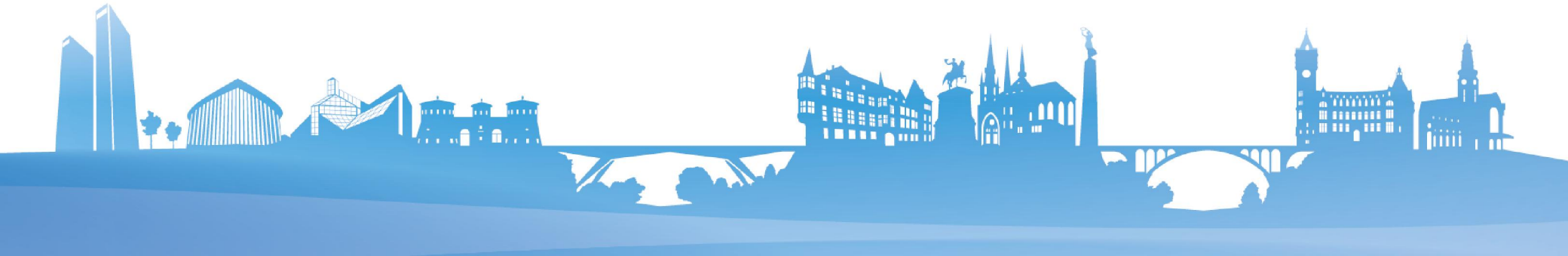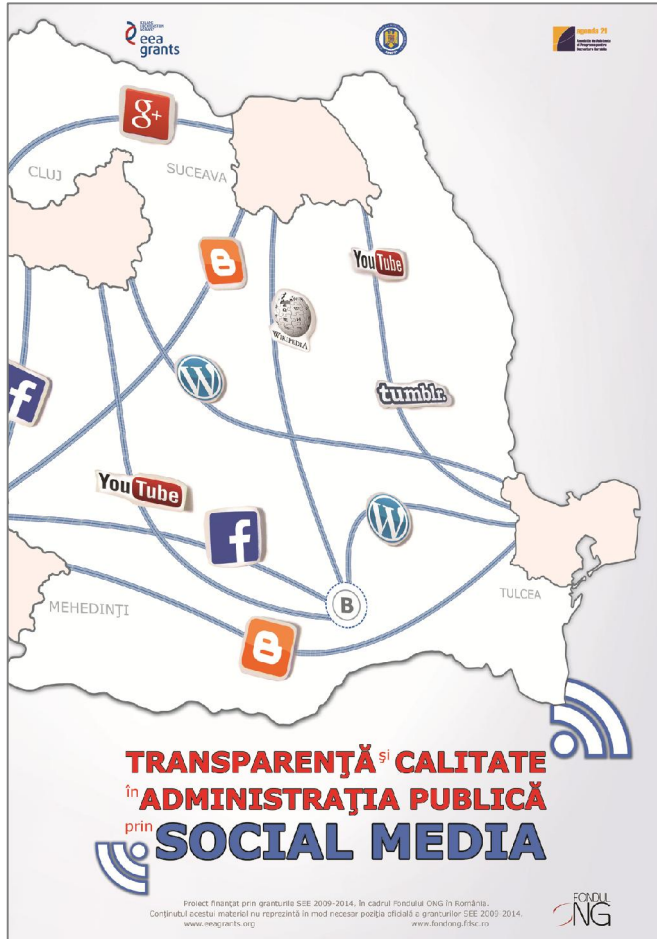# 8ᵗʰ Quality Conference

Session 5: Speak up! - Opportunities of Apps and Social Media

Title: Public Administration – Closer to the Citizens through Social Media

Name: Cristina Constantinescu

general facts on the case

- a project: Transparency and quality in public administration through social media
- co-finance: EEA grants 2009 – 2014, the NGO Programme in Romania
- two traditional partners – NGO & administration: the association Assistance and Programs for Sustainable Development (APSD)–Agenda 21 and the National Agency of Civil Servants (NACS)
- one year: 1 May 2014 – 30 April 2015
- local partners: county councils, prefect's institutions, mayor's offices, local services in Bucharest and 4 other counties in Romania

journey

low citizen participation in decision making and in drafting public policies

- collaboration with volunteers and NGOs in each location
- involvement of civil servants in the institutions in each location on engaging with citizens through social media

problem → **objective** → **activities** → **results**

use of social media networks in public administration as instruments to ensure transparency of public institutions, increase awareness and involvement of citizens in decision-making, enhance quality of public services delivered

- training sessions on the use of social media: for volunteers and civil servants
- handbook on the use of social media in PA
- research report: PA – Closer to the Citizens through Social Media
- a monitoring methodology
- workshops back to back

EUPAN
european public administration network

EIPA

LUXEMBOURG INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
LIST

context

problem	causes
▪ low citizen participation in decision making and in drafting public policies (30%)	▪ reduced performance of public institutions ▪ corruption ▪ financial crisis: people more focused on personal issues ▪ citizens think their opinion wouldn't matter ▪ citizens don't have the time

➢ promoting citizens' fundamental right to participate in public affairs by establishing effective channels of communication and consultation among citizens by the 20 local partners

➢ increasing transparency and good governance of/in the 20 local partners and their capacity to attract citizens in decision-making processes in local communities using social media networks

➢ encouraging volunteerism to benefit the community by training 30 volunteers, representatives of civil society and voluntarily involving civil servants in the process

➢ promoting a No Hate Speech campaign by the 20 public institutions/ authorities involved in the project and 5 local NGOs together with 25 volunteers
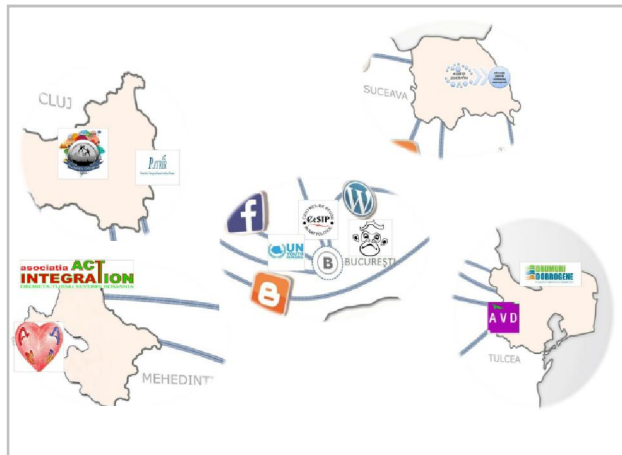
- ➢ increasing the role of civil society/ citizens in promoting good governance

- ➢ civil servants and citizens being involved in co-designing public policies, co-working to enhance transparency and render quality to services delivered by public authorities through innovative means

- ➢ good governance is almost always associated with the use of IT and both the Digital Agenda for Romania and the Government Program for 2012-2016 foresee the use of "e-Government, Interoperability, Cybersecurity, Cloud Computing and Social Media", fields which aim to increase efficiency and reduce costs in the public sector in Romania by modernizing the administration

innovative features

- ➢ introducing a training session on the use of social media in public administration

- ➢ designing a Handbook dedicated to civil servants who have as main duties managing social media for their institutions

- ➢ creating social media accounts for mayor's office in small towns or for very targeted local public services (public health, work inspection)

- ➢ organizing "events" on social media platforms in order to increase the quality of public services delivered and to co-product better policies: polls, consultations

EUPAN
european public administration network

EIPA

LUXEMBOURG
INSTITUTE
OF SCIENCE
AND TECHNOLOGY

ANFP

collaboration with volunteers

GRAND DUCHY OF
Presidency of
the Council of the
European Union .lu**xembourg**

- 10 NGOs from 4 counties in all regions of Romania and in Bucharest involved in the project

- 30 volunteers selected and trained

- 2 training sessions

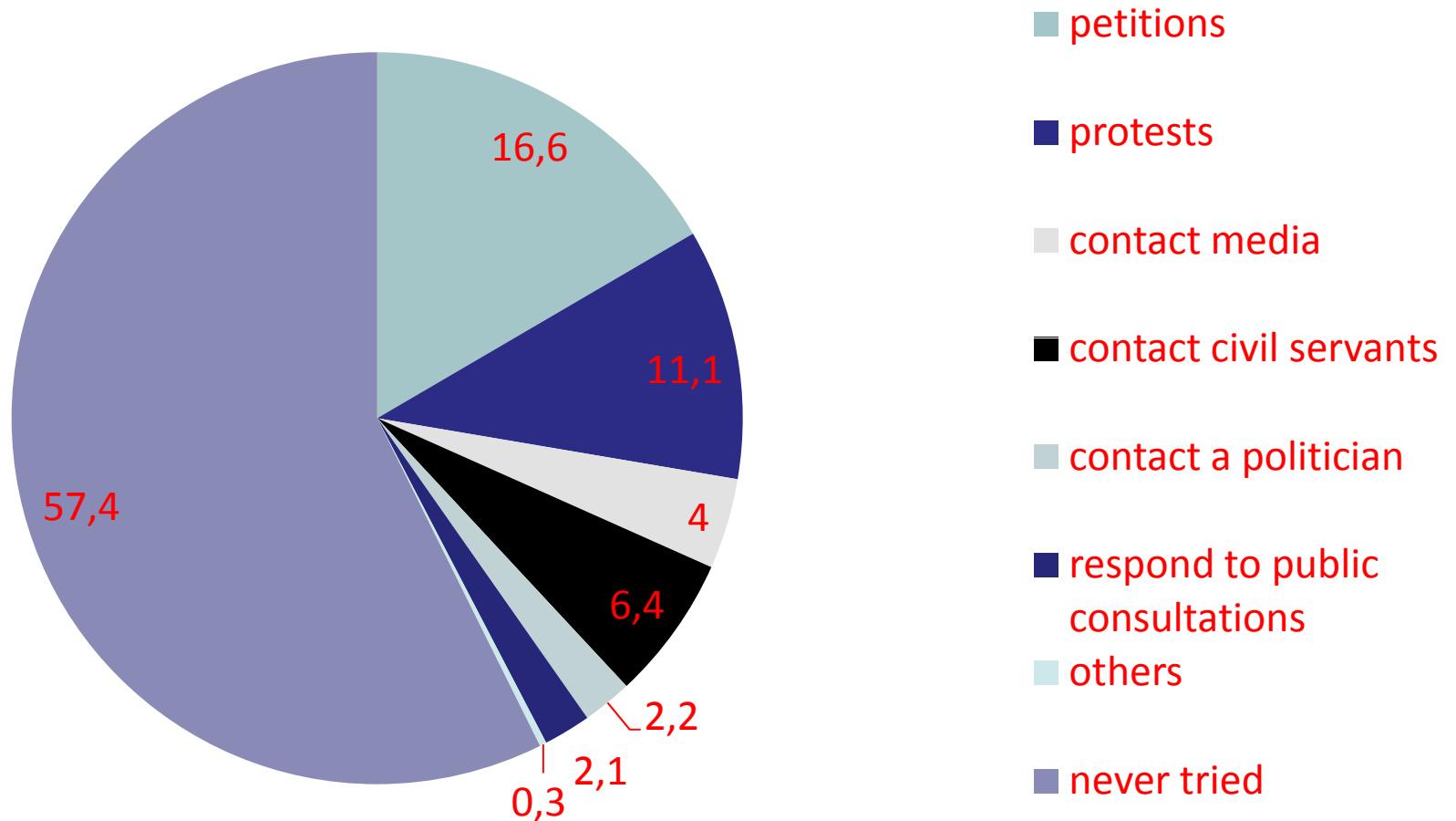1curriculum: legislation on PAR, transparency, FIY and social media, communication, monitoring procedures

- monitoring methodology applied for 2 questionnaires for interviews with 1,200 citizens and1,015 civil servants

research report: PA – Closer to the Citizens through Social Media

- ➢ aim: to identify measure to contribute to increasing citizen participation in decision making through the administration-wide usage of social media

- ➢ objectives: to diagnose the current status on transparency of PA, communication and mechanisms to engage citizens in drafting public policies, use of social media

- ➢ hypothesis: citizens satisfaction on services provided by public institutions is higher where the latter use social media

- ➢ research consisted of 2 parts: self-assessment of the 20 public institutions and citizens satisfaction measurement on:
  - relation/ communication (including social media) with citizens;
  - quality of services
  - citizens participation to making public policies

european public administration network

➢ quantitative (questionnaire) and qualitative (observation sheets - interviews) research

➢ main findings of citizens satisfaction:

- still a low participation of citizens to decision making, but a bit higher than in pre-existing statistics (42.6%): citizens mainly carrying for solving personal issues

- major concern for citizens in which they want to have a say in: jobs

- 32.7% of citizens think they don't have enough time to be involved, 24.9% think is useless and 28.4% of the latter wish to participate in the future
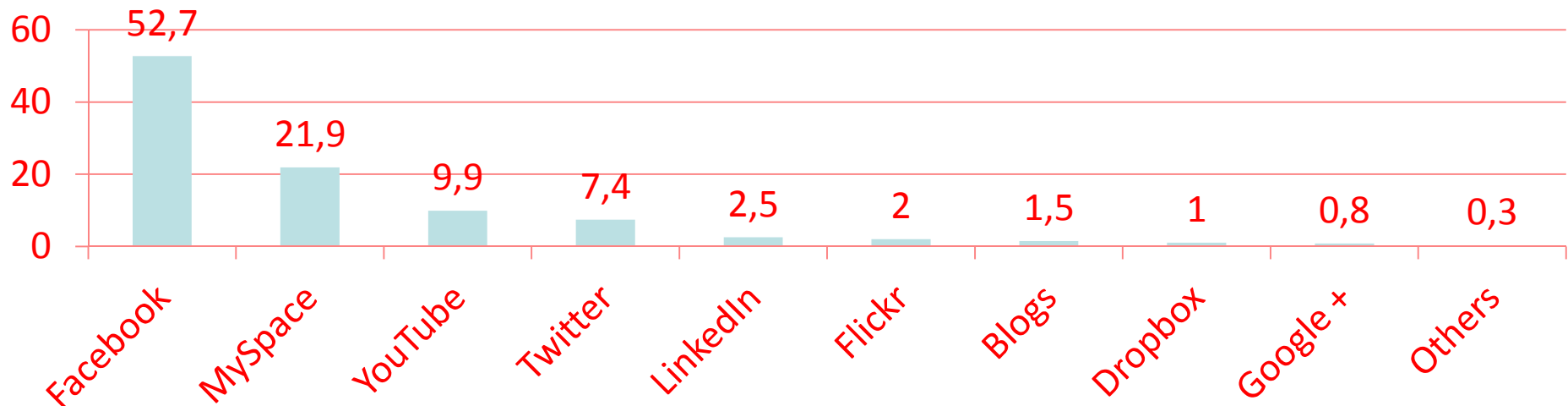
ways to influence decision making

- petitions
- protests
- contact media
- contact civil servants
- contact a politician
- respond to public consultations
- others
- never tried

16,6

11,1

4

6,4

2,2

2,1

0,3

57,4

research report

➢ **main findings of citizens satisfaction:**

- still a low degree of trust in PA (64.8%)
- 57.7% citizens use social media daily
- only 5% use social media to get info on PA activities and 0.3% use it to respond to public institution's initiatives to involve citizens

social media use

	Facebook	MySpace	YouTube	Twitter	LinkedIn	Flickr	Blogs	Dropbox	Google +	Others
	52,7	21,9	9,9	7,4	2,5	2	1,5	1	0,8	0,3

> main findings of citizens satisfaction:

- reasons not to engage with institutions on social media: face to face is better, no time, not necessary, no trust in online communication

- citizens satisfaction degree on public institutions' communication on social media is average (33.8%)

how often is social media use
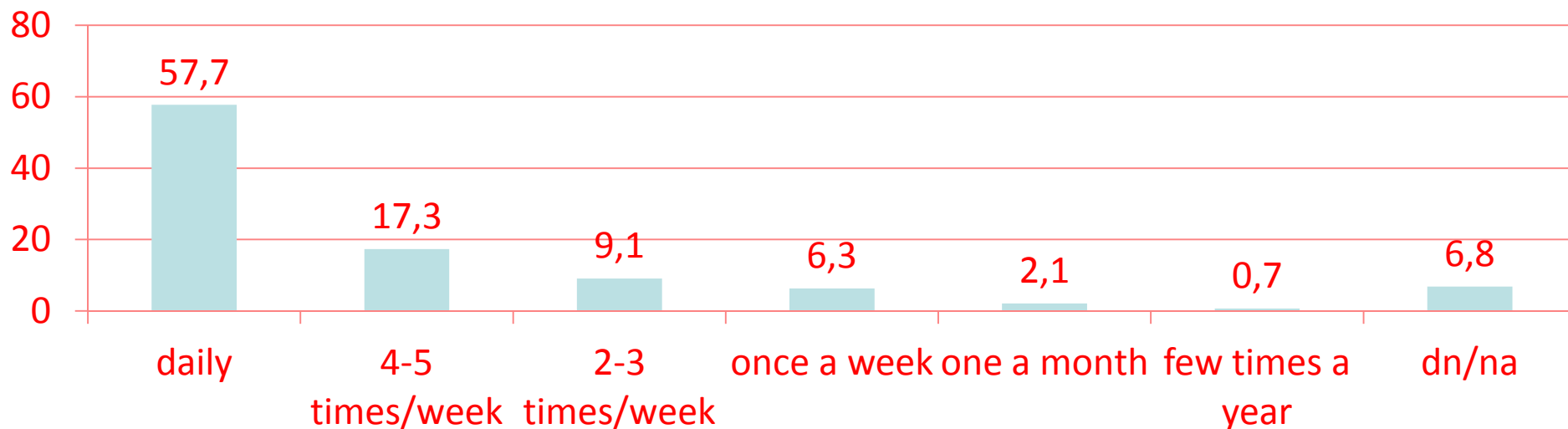
➢ main findings of public institutions self-assessment:

- discrepancy on citizens satisfaction degree and civil servants perception on how the citizens satisfaction degree is (76.5% satisfied)

- discrepancy: the services are focused on citizens needs (912 civil serv)

- over 75% civil servants are satisfied on the way the institution they work in communicates with/ consults the citizens, involves them in decision making

- some notable insatisfaction on: transparency (11%) and eficiency of consultations with citizens (14.8%)

research report

➢ **main findings of public institutions self-assessment:**

- 20% of institutions have strategies on social media use for: online petitions/ requests for information, online debates, polls, gathering ideas for local development plans
- 87.1% consider useful engaging with citizens through social media

+	-
▪ reduced distance between citizens and civil servants ▪ more transparent institutions	▪ eliminate citizens that don't use social media or do not have proper equipement/ skills ▪ generating also irrelevant discussions ▪ if not used properly by institutions can lead to mentaining/ spreading conservatory views of citizens that favor face to face interaction

ANFP

EUPAN
european public administration network

EIPA

LUXEMBOURG INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
LIST

1	what is social media? short history
2	social media networks
3	world-wide tendencies in social media
4	benefits of social media use in PA
5	institutional framework for social media use in PA
6	selection criteria for social media channels
7	good practices on social media use in PA
8	tools to measure impact of social media use in PA
9	social media strategies and campaigns

figures

- 1 curriculum on social media use in PA developed and delivered

- 1 training session on social media delivered on a three days period

- 40 civil servants from 20 participant public institutions and authorities trained

social media channels

figures

- more than 60 social media accounts developed/ created: Facebook, YouTube, Google +, Twitter, Instagram, Blog

social media events

social media events

- more than 60 social media events on informing/ consulting the citizens on matters of public interest such as:

- environment protection actions

- public consultations on different public policies: development plans for cities, for the Danube Delta

- social campaigns

- online polls on citizens satisfaction on services delivered

- information on different events

EUPAN
european public administration network

EIPA

LUXEMBOURG INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
LI ST

monitoring back-to-back workshops

| figures |
| --- |
| ▪ 4 institions in each county and Bucharest + NGOs involved in the project presented self-assessment reports and evaluations after monitoring the online activity of the 20 institutions in the project during 5 back-to-back workshops |
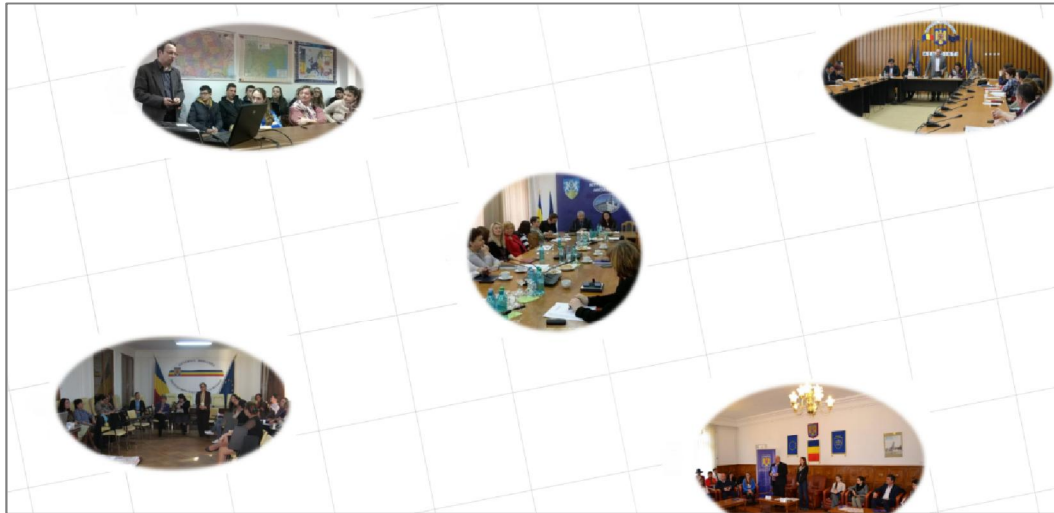
figures

- 1 national competition for good practices on the use of social media in public institutions and authorities

- 32 practices included in the guide

- 10 practices awarded at the final conference

no hate campaign
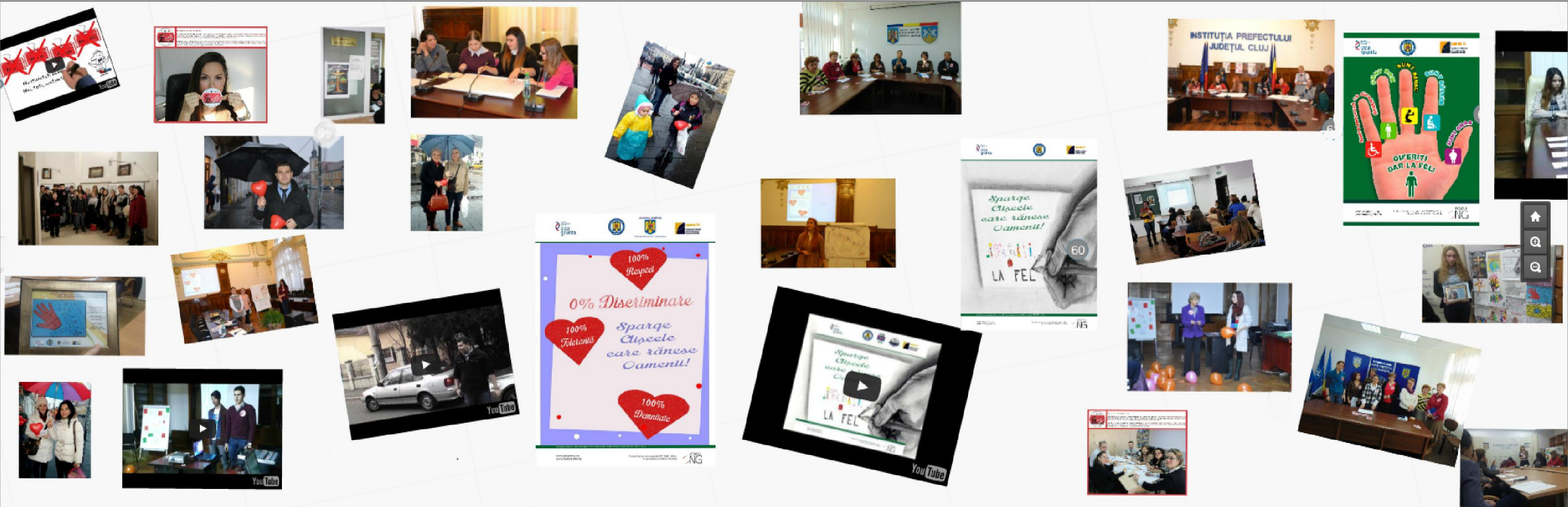
➢ the training session on the use of social media in PA was introduced in NACS's training offer on request

➢ the Handbook on the use of social media in PA dedicated to civil servants will be used during the training sessions

➢ including social media use in PA as theme in different events and writing articles on it in the biannual review dedicated to civil servants

➢ good practice exchange and discussions in an informal communicators group in central PA (already discussed internal procedures on using social media) in order to change/ improve legislation

➢ constant dissemination on developments on social media for practioners

➢ there was strong multiplication effect among the 20 public institutions: successful practices where copied by others

➢ there was a strong competition among the 20 public institutions to have the biggest impact (reach, likes etc.)

➢ there is a close connection between e-government initiatives meant to reduce administrative burden and social media, but also a close inter-institutional collaboration to implement campaigns of interest to citizens

➢ heads of institutions have an important role in adopting social media as communication tools and committing to it: they adopted a digital engagement, involving the institution in this project, approving the strategies/ procedures, participating to events during the project's implementation etc.

GRAND DUCHY OF

Presidency of
the Council of the
European Union **lu**xembourg

➢ main problems of using social media channels in PA: the lack of responsiveness of the institution to complex questions from the audience, inadequacy of language in exchanging from the official website to social media tools, the lack of personnel to manage accounts, lack of interest of citizens participate / to be involved etc.

➢ there is a stringent need for professionalizing civil servants, for training them in using these tools and all other complementary fields (communication, protocol etc.)

➢ do not ignore the public that uses social media and do not focus only on classical interaction

lessons learned

did great	would do differently
▪ involving volunteers from civil society ▪ contracting a social media expert and organizing informal Skype couseling sessions with the project team and the civil servants in each county ▪ monitoring social media use from two perspectives: from inside (colleagues of civil servants in charge with managing social media accounts) and outside (volunteers) and organizing back to back workshops ▪ the handbook	▪ select the participating institutions based on voluntary application not randomly ▪ extend the training session to 5 days ▪ focus more on social media use in the study and less on general interaction of institutions with citizens

lessons learned

would add	would avoid
▪ workshops in each location where experts on social media meet civil servants in charge with managing their institution's official social media accounts (after the training sessions) ▪ debates on improving the legislation related to social media use	▪ involving volunteers from civil society in the project without having a strong NGO partner to coordinate them ▪ randomly picking institutions to be part in the project ▪ making a new research if data on social media use in PA is available

EUPAN
european public administration network

EIPA

LUXEMBOURG INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY