

The project « Juniors for seniors-active ageing » was funded with the support of the European Union under the Programme "Europe for Citizens"

Applicable to the Strand 2 – Measure 2.2 "Networks of Towns"

Measure 2.3 "Civil Society Projects"

Strand 1 – "European Remembrance"



6 events have been carried out within this project:

Event 1:

"An International Meeting of Mayors on the topic of Development and Exchange of Participatory Practices" Škofja Loka, Slovenia

Participation: The event involved 50 citizens, including 24 participants from the city of Škofja Loka, Slovenia; 2 participants from the city of Judenburg, Austria; 2 participants from the city of Kőszeg, Hungary; 2 participants from the city of Bad Kötzting, Germany; 2 participants from the city of Chojna, Poland; 4 participants from the city of Sušice, Czech Republic; 2 participants from the city of Siret, Romania; 2 participants from the city of Rokiškis, Lithuania; 2 participants from the city of Rovinj, Croatia; 2 participants from the city of Meerssen, Netherlands; 2 participants from the city of Maasmechelen, Belgium. 2 representatives from Sherborne, UK and 3 representatives from Sesimbra, Portugal also took part in the meeting. Albania was represented by their ambassador, Mr. Pëllumb Qazimi.

Location / Dates: The event took place in Škofja Loka (Slovenia), from 26th to 28th September 2019.

Short description:

The event was focused on participatory practises. Municipal representatives and guest of honour Albanian ambassador attended the presentations of selected examples of good participatory practices and step-by-step process how to implement the participatory budget.

Mayors, deputy mayors and directors of municipal administrations from twinned and partner towns were the main attendees of the international meeting. Following the introductory presentation of the central topic, methods and goals of the meeting, Raf Terwingen, the Mayor of the twinned town Maasmechelen, Elke Florian, Deputy Mayor of Judenburg in Styria (Austria), and Janez Černe from the neighbouring Municipality of Kranj, presented selected examples of good participatory practices. A common thread of various successful practices is in creating and building trust that strengthens the community and cooperation, in introducing practices that are very inclusive, can be used by all citizens, are sustainable and encourage (intergenerational) cooperation.

In the second part, the two hosts introduced the step-by-step process and procedures that led to the introduction, implementation and functioning/operating of the participatory budget in the municipality of Ajdovščina, where the employees have done pioneering work in this field in Slovenia.

In the final part of the international meeting, participants took part in the workshop, presented ideas and made concrete suggestions on how participation could be implemented and how it could be successful for the elderly and the young in their local communities. Upon completion of the workshops, the participants were informed about the future course of events and about the programme of the international project Europe for Citizens, which will culminate with the organization of an international conference in Škofja Loka, in May 2020.

In the evening part of the meeting, the participants discussed the topic addressed and made plans about the organisation and contents of the next five meetings, which will be held in Judenburg, Škofja Loka, Kőszeg, Kruja and Bad Kötzing.

Event 2:

“Challenges of the quality aging of seniors” Škofja Loka, Slovenia

Participation: The event involved 95 citizens, including 61 participants from municipality of Škofja Loka, Slovenia, 2 participants from the Bashkia Kruje, Albania, 3 participants from Stadtgemeinde Judenburg, Austria, 5 participants from Stadt Bad Kötzing, Germany, 3 participants from Bundoran, Ireland, 4 participants from Mesto Sušice, Czech Republic, 4 participants from Municipality of Rokiškis, Lithuania, 4 participants from Kőszeg Város, Hungary, 3 participants from Orasul Siret, Romania, 6 participants from Vereniging Meerssen, Netherlands.

Location / Dates: The event took place in Škofja Loka (Slovenia), from 3/9/2020 to 5/9/2020

Short description:

The event in Škofja Loka focussed on solving the challenges of the quality aging of seniors through workshops and the exchange of experiences and good practices. The program was tailor-made for the needs of four target groups: officials, teachers, students and seniors.

Thursday, September 3rd:

The first day was dedicated to the arrival and accommodation of participants. The participants got to know the historical centre of Škofja Loka in a guided tour and a visit to the cultural exhibition opening. The day was concluded with a welcome dinner, which was an excellent opportunity for the introduction of traditional Slovenian cuisine, multicultural dialogue and bonding among participants.

Friday, September 4th:

On the second day the detailed program of all 5 future events with the keynote “Challenges of aging in European towns” was introduced to participants. After the plenary introduction 4 parallel workshops for each target group (officials, teachers, students, seniors) were implemented. All four workshops were structured around key elements:

- Presentation of participants
- The aging situation in each town (numbers and trends)
- Key challenges you face
- Some best practices in addressing aging in your town

At the Seniors` workshop which took place at Public University premises speakers presented the aging situation, the main challenges and the best practices in their towns together with the civil organizations dealing with elderly people. Participating cities sent their own materials and explained their view. These materials were presented and discussed in the workshop.

At the Officials' workshop good practices in each municipal administration were highlighted such as the establishment of a senior council, a senior coordinator, intergenerational buildings etc. Apart from good practices other possible solutions were identified such as Multigenerational playgrounds in the communities. One part of the workshop was dedicated to the identification of problems in elderly homes in each municipality and to new ideas how to introduce new activities for seniors in the light of corona safety measures. The conclusion of the workshop was that many municipal administrators are facing the same problems and it would be very beneficial for all towns involved if the official website of the town network Douzelage had its own section with projects and ideas so that other communities could refer to these best practice examples.

The Teachers' workshop dealt with the ageing situation, trends and local policies and practices in participating towns in the view of different target groups with the aim of getting familiar with different situations and challenges and existing practices in participating towns.

Event 3:

"Intergenerational cooperation and seniors e-education" Kőszeg, Hungary

Participation: The event involved 90 citizens, including 51 participants from Kőszeg Város, Hungary, 5 participants from municipality of Škofja Loka, Slovenia, 4 participants from Stadtgemeinde Judenburg, Austria, 5 participants from Stadt Bad Kötzing, Germany, 3 participants from Mesto Sušice, Czech Republic, 3 participants from Municipality of Rokiškis, Lithuania, 2 participants from Tryavna, Bulgaria, 3 participants from Orasul Siret, Romania, 3 participants from Vereniging Meerssen, Netherlands, 4 participants from Zvolen, Slovakia, 4 participants from Chojna, Poland, 1 participant from Holstebro, Denmark and 2 participants from Agros, Cyprus.

Location/Dates: The event took place in Kőszeg, Hungary, from 26/08/2021 to 29/08/2021

Short description:

The event in Kőszeg focused on the relationship of seniors and modern technology, e-education of seniors, change of education, travel, and communication possibilities. Workshops, presentations, discussions, exchange of experiences and good practices and study visits were used to reach our goals. The main target groups were teachers and students, but the presence and point of view of some seniors and officials were also important.

Thursday, August 26th:

The first day was mostly dedicated to the arrival and accommodation of international participants and their registration. The opening ceremony started with a remarkable piano concert given by a 107-year-old lady; it completely fits to the project theme. Participants were greeted by the head of the Lutheran school, which was the site of the meetings, and by the head of the organizer Town Twinning Association. The moderator – a young University student asked the participants to introduce themselves shortly. Delegations also gave those presents which – as a surprise – were put into the exhibition cabinet next day. The evening finished with a welcome dinner, which was an excellent opportunity for the introduction of traditional Hungarian cuisine, multicultural dialogue, and bonding among participants.

Friday, August 27th:

Two short lectures helped the participants to warm up, and to tune into the group work. The title of the first lecture was a short sentence: You will be old, as well. Claire Strasbaugh presented advice on planning for a good quality of life from a lady who celebrated her 100-year birthday this summer. After this Anna Heitler gave the presentation of the questionnaire results on the living arrangements of youth and elderly. The questionnaire – sent to the partner towns half year before the event – was answered by about 600 seniors in 12 countries. The lectures were followed by workshops in 4 mixed groups (by age and nation). Participants were divided into 4 groups that – if possible – each nation could be represented in each group. The first group discussed the following: What I like/dislike about young people/old people. The second group discussed the Stereotypes about young people/old people. The third group discussed the following: What am I/am I not envious of young/old people. The fourth group discussed the good effects and bad effects of the pandemic on the relationship between young people and seniors.

After the workshops and group photo the work continued with a group interview. The panel discussion, modelled after the Hungarian talk show *Ridikül*, featured a multi-national, multi-generational group of “guests” and two Hungarian high school students acting as hosts or interviewers. Following that sample, seven participants were previously asked to take part in the program. The topics were: Communication earlier and now; Travelling opportunities earlier and now. The two Hungarian reporters, Anna Benedikti and Hanna Andrasek (both students) talked with interesting guests who were coming from different geographical region and age group.

After lunch the work continued with workshop about educational methods. As a warmup or introduction Claire Strasbaugh shared the interview with her 100-year-old grandmother who talked about her experiences. After this, participants formed 3 groups: students, teachers, other (parents, grandparents etc.). The workshops were organized in 3 classrooms about the changing educational methods (Prussian, modern, digital etc.). After the workshop group leaders summarized the discussion results.

After the coffee break the last part was short presentation of the good practices. practices on the following fields; teaching IT for senior, social inclusion of seniors, maintaining physical and mental fitness of seniors, what do seniors get from youngsters and vice versa? Partners were asked to highlight those methods they have not seen before and were successful in their neighbourhood.

Saturday, August 28:

The whole program on Saturday contributed to the workshops and discussions on the previous day. It started with a town visit, but in an unusual way. First, some members of the “Darabonts” (a historical association) talked about the Turkish siege (1532) which made Kőszeg well-known all over Europe. It was also a good example of the cooperation of older and younger members, as their age ranges between 17 and 81.

After this presentation the guided tour gave impression about the life in an 800-year-old town. Not only the 500-year-old buildings, but the tradition, the honour market impressed the foreign visitors. Another group signed up to bicycle visit of the town and its surrounding. Meanwhile both groups could see examples for efforts the town leaders try to help older people with repairing roads, sidewalks etc.

The guided tour finished at the Town Twinning Park – or Europe Park – where participants could see how Kőszeg celebrates its numerous partner towns, how the local government and associations present the town’s partners to the citizens and visitors. After the lunch participants were taken to the Iron Curtain Museum which is an open-air museum with parts of the Iron Curtain on exhibit. The day, and the whole event was concluded with a multicultural performance of a Folk music group, and gala dinner.

Event 4:

“Mobility and Accessibility for Seniors “Judenburg, Austria

Participants: The event involved 75 citizens from the participating cities; 40 participants from the city of Judenburg/Austria, 16 participants from the city of Skofja Loka/Slovenia, 3 participants from the city of Bad Kötzing/Germany, 2 participants from the city of Bundoran/Ireland, 3 participants from the city of Susice/Czech Republic, 4 participants from the city of Rokiskis/Lithuania, 4 participants from the city of Kőszeg/Hungary, 3 participants from the city of Meerssen/Netherlands. The event in Judenburg focused on the topic of "Mobility and Accessibility for Seniors". The program was tailored to the target groups of officials (especially politicians) and senior citizens.

Location / Dates: The event took place in Judenburg (Austria), from 23th to 25th September 2021.

Short description:

24th September

The congress was opened by Hannes Dolleschall, mayor of the City of Judenburg, Elke Florian, vice mayor of the City of Judenburg, Thorsten Wohleser, city councilor and organizer of "Douzelage" Judenburg, Annigje Krytbosch, president of "Douzelage" and Miha Jese, organizer of "Juniors for Seniors “- active aging. Daniel Peter Gressl - the initiator of the Ö-Nurse Judenburg - an all-encompassing health consultancy and expert in the care sector, was invited as a key-note speaker. The topic of this speech was "Challenges of Aging", where the current development trend of senior citizens was presented and discussed. In particular, the needs of a so-called community nurse were addressed. After the speech 3 workshops were implemented.

The first workshop dealt with the current situation in the participating cities. This includes, in particular, suggestions for improvement and existing obstacles for the elderly and, in particular, people with reduced mobility, as well as “best practice” examples from the participating cities.

Each participating city has prepared a lecture for this purpose, with the presentations of the individual cities being attached.

The second workshop was carried out according to the principle of “learning by doing”. Four routes were defined in which the participants had the opportunity to overcome barriers themselves in a wheelchair, a walker, a stroller and using glasses for being blind. Best practice examples from the host city of Judenburg were tested and insurmountable obstacles were perceived. This close-up approach was received very positively and was able to make the extremely important topic tangible in a very informative way and generated quite a few AHA experiences! In the subsequent discussion rounds, these experiences could be exchanged and documented.

At the third workshop the two focus groups “Officials” and “Seniors” were divided into two working groups. The findings of the individual participating cities from workshop 1 and from the city walk from workshop 2 were discussed and specific applications for the individual cities were derived.

Event 5:

Bad Kötzing, Germany

Participation: The event involved 53 citizens, including 4 participants from Judenburg, Austria, 5 participants from Škofja Loka, Slovenia, 7 participants from Kőszeg, Hungary, 20 participants from Bad Kötzing, Germany, 3 participants from Sušice, Czech Republic, 3 participants from Rokiškis, Lithuania, 7 participants from Meerssen, Netherlands, and 3 participants from Bundoran, Ireland, 1 participant from Altea, Spain.

Location / Dates: The event took place in Bad Kötzing, Germany, from 21/04/2022 to 23/04/2022

Short description:

The event in Bad Kötzing focused on the forms of housing and ways of life as well as the possibilities of living together in the European partner cities. Offers in the cities of Europe were also presented that promote the coexistence of young and old people and examples from practice were shown directly on site in Bad Kötzing.

Thursday, 21st.04.2022

At arrival all participants received an information bag with leaflets about interesting places that were promoted by the European Union in terms of international understanding on the German-Czech border and information material from the "Europe Direct" information centre.

The official opening of the event took place in the park in the town of Bad Kötzing where European guests were greeted by traditional Bavarian brass band music near the so-called "Europe Stone Circle" with some traditional marches from Bavaria, Bohemia, Austria and Slovenia. The youth council members organized the opening and wore traditional clothes. The war in Ukraine and the coming challenges for Europe were discussed in the opening speeches of the main organizers. After the speeches, the participants had the opportunity to exchange ideas at a small reception.

Friday, 22nd.04.2022

After breakfast, young people from Bad Kötzing accompanied the delegations to the local high school.

The program started with presentation of the questionnaire results on the living arrangements of youth and elderly. After the presentation of the results, the participants were invited to speak, discuss and comment on the results.

After that, the participants were divided into groups and discussed prepared questions. In the following you will first read the questions and then briefly summarized answers that arose in the course of discussions.

The delegations from the European partner cities presented the projects and best examples of successful implementation in the respective partner cities. The results of the different approaches were presented, discussed with each other and already adopted.

After lunchtime talks about the similarities and differences in Europe, the delegations from the partner cities set out for the first best-practice example in Bad Kötzing. It is a retirement home with a kindergarten. Seniors and children live together here and enrich each other. After that a short city tour was supplemented by archivist's historical accounts.

At the end of the workshop day, the participants visited the so-called "Sinocur" building" (new spa and prevention centre). There the guests heard an interesting lecture by Prof. Dr. Wühr about the unique health offer for the residents and visitors of the city.

The program concluded after the dinner when the young people from Bad Kötzing presented their specially developed Europe quiz. The sometimes-tricky questions about the European Union challenged the guests, who took part with great enthusiasm.

Saturday, 23rd.04.2022

The program on this day was a voluntary, additional program, which was largely organized by the young people of the city of Bad Kötzing. During the offers, the European friends exchanged ideas. Strangers became friends through joint activities. The delegations that have not yet left could choose between three leisure options: Visit of the SPA AQACUR, Walking on the Planet-Way with a visit of our Geodetic Observatory in Wettzell, Hiking on the mountain "Kaitersberg". In the evening, the delegations visited the state-run casino in Bad Kötzing.

Event 6:

Final conclusions of the Project and the General Meeting of the association of the European towns "DOUZELAGE", Škofja Loka, Slovenia

Participation: The event involved 242 citizens, 99 participants from Škofja Loka, 1 participant from Kruje, Albania, 4 participants from Judenburg, Austria, 9 participants from Bad Kötzing, Germany, 4 participants from Asikkala, Finland, 6 participants from Douzelage Bundoran, Ireland, 8 participants from Sušice, Czech Republic, 6 participants from Rokiškis, Lithuania, 7 participants from Kőszeg, Hungary, 7 participants from Holstebro Douzelage, Denmark, 5 participants from Tryavna, Bulgaria, 6 participants from Siret, Romania, 15 participants from Vereniging Meerssen, Netherlands, 6 participants from Chojna, Poland, 2 participants from Agros, Cyprus, 4 participants from Rovinj-Rovigo, Croatia, 6 participants from Sesimbra, Portugal, 5 participants from Altea, Spain, 7 participants from Granville, France, 10 participants from Marsaskala, Malta, 3 participants from Niederanven, Luxembourg, 3 participants from Oxelosund, Sweden, 12 participants from Sherborne, United Kingdom, 3 participants from Sigulda, Latvia and 4 participants from Türi, Estonia.

Location / Dates: The event took place in Škofja Loka (Slovenia) in the cultural centrum Sokolski dom, in Gymnasia Škofja Loka, and youth center Rdeča ostriga from 25.8.-28.8.2022

Short description:

The three days event program was focused on meetings and workshops separated on the three locations for the three groups of participants: Officials, Teachers, and Students. The workshops of all groups were presented also to Seniors. Together – through the presentation of the conclusions of the international 'Juniors for Seniors - active aging' project – we also tried to find solutions to another extremely contemporary challenge: how to establish, preserve and strengthen active cooperation between young people and the elderly! The main topics/key challenges of these high-quality projects were: seniors' e-educations, (public/accessible) transport, accessibility, and living conditions for seniors and youth. We were looking for solutions through the lens of four focus groups: officials, teachers, students, and seniors.

Thursday, August 25th

The official launch of the general meeting took place in Sokolski dom in Škofja Loka, where there was an opening of the exhibition of the previous Douzelage photo contests.

Friday, August 26th

The education meeting program was organized with a team of Škofja Loka Grammar School teachers. We wanted to share our school practices, local NGOs with their various activities and finally, the guest teachers from 26 EU countries were asked to share their examples of juniors for seniors' cooperation and the new challenges they cope with. Several workshops were organized at Škofja Loka Grammar school where we discussed many possibilities the schools in EU have when speaking of the elderly: various school projects, voluntary work in local communities and elderly home institutions, and different activities in their local community centers.

On the other side, Slovene NGOs (Škofja Loka Pensioners' Association Centre, Adult Education Centre, and others) presented their local and national schemes on the Slovene elderly care institutional system and intergenerational support for the elderly, and volunteers' associations.

In the discussion that followed it turned out that we all share more or less the same practices when speaking of cross-generation activities in different Douzelage towns.

One of our workshops focused on local cultural heritage (decoration of honey bread hearts). We decided to invite an expert on our teenagers, dr. Žan Lep, Pedagogical Institute Ljubljana, who prepared a lecture for EM participants: We should talk about the zoomers. The EM participants all teach in secondary schools, which means that we all share the same problems since young people born after 2000(i.e. the zoomers) are alike throughout Europe.

Finally, there was time for the guest teachers to present their local practices. We realized that every town (and consequently) every school with the help of local NGOs, municipalities, and also nationally through a wide range of different activities, projects and programs take active care of the elderly.

Friday was the most intense day when it comes to activities of the Youth Meeting. The first part of the activities took place at MKC Pri rdeči ostrigi. To start of we got to know each other through some ice-breaker games in order to feel more relaxed and familiar with each other. What followed was a lovely presentation of the delegates from Bulgaria, who showed us exactly how they ensure great intergenerational coexistence and active ageing. In a group we then talked about our own experiences and good practices in that field. After the workshops and later lunch, we had some relaxing activities – handcraft workshops at Center DUO for one group and beach volley for the other.

The days program concluded with a Common session in the Cinema Sora where the final conclusions of the project were presented and discussed with all participants officials, teachers, youth, several ambassadors of EU member states representatives of Slovenian senior organizations, and guests.

Saturday, August 27th

Saturday started with Escape city – Škofja Loka edition, which was a great way of getting to know the town after that the participants attended different leisure activities organized by the host partner. The event's official closing was on Saturday evening at a gala dinner, where all the participants received certificates of participation.

Additional event JUNIORS FOR SENIORS – ACTIVE AGING PROJECTS SESSION IN ASIKKALA

Participants: 1 participant from the city of Škofja Loka, 20 participants from the city of Asikkala

Location / Dates: Asikkala, Finland 16.9.2022

Short description:

Miha Jese, lead partner project manager presented the project to the participants (local youth and elderly) and talked about different sessions in other cities that had taken place during this project. Merja Palokangas-Viitanen, Eero Ala-Heikkilä and Saimi Vesterinen, members of Asikkalas 2022 Douzelage-delegation talked about their experience at the seminars and meetings in Škofja Loka.

The presentation of the project experience and conclusions was followed by the discussion of the participants.