

The project « Touch the Stars » was funded with the support of the European Union under the Programme "Europe for Citizens"

Applicable to the Strand 2 – Measure 2.1 "Town-Twinning"

Participation: The project involved 1200 citizens, notably 1000 participants from the city of Veľký Meder (**Slovakia**), 50 participants from the city of Dobruska (**Czech Republic**), 50 participants from the city of Bacsalmás (**Hungary**), 50 participants from the city of Lendava (**Slovenia**), 50 participants from the city of Sangeorgiu de Padure (**Romania**).

Location/ Dates: The event took place in Veľký Meder (**Slovakia**), from 15/09/2016 to 17/09/2016

Short description:

The day of 15/09/2016 was dedicated to familiarization among the participants. The initial activities were of social character and helped overcome barriers between citizens of five European countries. After the arrival of foreign guests an opening ceremony was held, which was connected with the vernissage of works of art on the theme of Foreigners in Europe. This actual issue of migration was an example of the heading of the project. The event also pointed to the fact that foreigners have lived among us for a long time. The program continued with the first of a series of activities entitled Raising the future of the EU. It was devoted to the introduction of the history of the European Union as an element that connects the project themes, the partners and the present nations. Thanks to this the participants learned more about the EU, why it was created and where it is heading. Friendly competitiveness was the leitmotiv of the cycling race, which led the sport-willing participants through almost the entire town of Velky Meder. The afternoon and evening activities were social in nature. They brought the element of warmth, friendship and breaking down barriers into the meeting of citizens from the twin towns.

The day of 16/09/2016 was dedicated to the themes of solidarity, migration and partnership. All generations, including the elderly were actively involved in the activities of the day. Just for them a joint meeting was prepared where they could exchange experience. The project was also important for the partnership. A negotiation of municipal leaders and active citizens was also held. They discussed about the problems and needs of individual towns and their citizens and the possibilities of further or closer cooperation, too. The partners succeeded in creating and signing a strategic partnership document - Manifest of the partnership. This became the basis for future project and non-project cooperation. The issue of migration was part of the second in the series of activities entitled Raising the future of the EU. Representatives of minorities and migrants living long-term in Slovakia debated together. The discussion highlighted the need for solidarity among people, regardless of race, religion or nationality. Another activity of the cycle Raising the future of the EU was the beneficial purchase of baskets filled with various items. The yield was determined to help migrants placed in camps in Turkey. This activity highlighted the need for solidarity. The social activities also included the ecumenical church service and laying wreaths in memory of the fallen heroes in war conflicts in the past. During the whole evening presentation of the cultures of the present nations took place. Activities devoted to culture helped bring together people from different countries.

The day of 17/09/2016 was dedicated to the issues of the EU, gastronomy and culture. The start of the day belonged to competitiveness. Contestants from the twinned towns and members of non-profit organizations from twinned towns competed in cooking pepper and tomato stew and other dishes. They showcased their culinary skills, presenting traditional products of their town / region. So, the participants had the opportunity to learn about food from Hungary, the Czech Republic, Romania, Slovenia and the home cuisine, too. Presentation of gastronomy also included the presentation of the wines of the partner regions. Workshops and traditional markets were part of the presentation and preservation of traditions of ancestors. Together with the culture presented throughout the day and the Holy Mass it was about creating space for bringing citizens of five partners, five European countries together. During the day, two activities of the Raising the future of the EU series were realized, that is handing out promotional materials about the EU, discussions on the EU and performance of volunteering. These activities raised the knowledge of citizens about the EU. At the same time they were a presentational place for volunteering, work of local NGOs, helping others, especially migrants. The day was completed by creating a pillar of the partnership, as a symbol of the project and of the bright future of the partnership.