



Project "Velke Ripnany 2017 - We are connecting the EU citizens" was funded by the European Union within the program Europe for citizens

Applicable to 2.1 "Town-twinning arrangements"

Participation: In this project, there was enabled the meeting of 803 citizens, from these people 599 came from the municipality Velke Ripnany (Slovakia), 56 from MZ Sopotnica - Prijepolje (Serbia), 46 from Dabrowa (Poland), 4 people from the non-profit organization Association Internationale des Soldats de la Paix (France), 14 from Szanda (Hungary), 25 from the Union of Veterans of the Slovak Republic (Slovakia), 9 from Czech-Slovak Legionnaire (Czech Republic) and 50 people from Zeletice (Czech Republic).

Place/dates: The meeting took place in the municipality (Velke Ripnany, Slovakia) from 29 September 2017 to 01 October 2017.

Summary: On 29 September, the mayor of the municipality Velke Ripnany, officially welcomed the participants of the event, presented the main idea of the project, the individual partners and their role in the project. He also informed the participants with the history of this cooperation. The participants of the event focused on the issues of European citizenship, solidarity, tolerance, EU policy and its impact on the lives of EU citizens. Participants gained overview, practical examples of solutions to the current EU issues, as well as security and threats of EU values. Representatives of partner municipalities and associations discussed the possibilities of cooperation. The presentation of the topic "Guess, which country I come from" has made it possible to build a relationship with the European Union by the youngest members and they have received the basic information about the individual member states. In the evening, a musical cultural program was held to know the cultures, traditions and customs of the people, living in the European Union.

On 30 September, the participants focused on euroscepticism and its impact on the EU's future, they gained information about the benefits of EU policies, EU achievements, ways of local (regional) development, the relationship between EU policies and national policies, about the impact of the EU mechanism to the member states. They have also received more specific information about the benefits and opportunities that the EU provides to its citizens. An example of good practice was presented in the afternoon, where the participants gained a specific idea of the possibilities of using the local initiatives and community development projects. The participants of the event have realised the importance of active participation in community life, supporting citizens' activities in community development and introducing participatory elements into the management and operation of municipalities. Interesting projects, that have been implemented, were presented to the citizens. During the evening, participants had the opportunity to discuss about the future of the EU, they presented their long-term visions about the operation of the EU. They also offered new ideas and possible steps, the EU should implement. These ideas were related to social, economic and political cohesion, how to maintain its leading role in an increasingly globalized world, facing global problems. As part of the cultural and sporting activities, there were held a demonstration of traditional craft skills and gastronomy, an exhibition of works of art from previous meetings, as well as activities for children - an art competition related to the EU, puzzles, flags.

On October 1, participants in the event got information how to engage in EU affairs, about the fundamental rights of EU citizens and their role in civil society. They gained briefing of the tools of civic participation in the EU policy making process, such as The Citizens Dialogue, Your Voice for Europe and also the possibility of active participation in the European Parliament elections 2019. A final conference was targeted on the evaluation of the project, the results achieved, the consistency with the EU priorities and the impact on the lives of the participating citizens. During the event, participants were provided with an information stand with the topic "Volunteering" aimed at presenting an active form of young people's participation at local, regional and European level. The participants in the event learned about the positive aspects of volunteering, such as the introduction of the core value of EU solidarity into practice, as well as the European Solidarity Forum initiative. The young generation got knowledges about the benefits, experiences and opportunities of volunteering and gained a different view of volunteering activities (a tool to increase the level of competencies related to the labor market and the way of community development).

