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ADULTS MEETING REPORT

**SMALL MEETING
OF THE CHARTER OF EUROPEAN RURAL COMMUNITIES
IN LASSEE – AUSTRIA
14/09/2017 - 18/09 2017**



GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE MEETING

PROJECT: Co-funded by the Europe for Citizens Programme of the European Union
Strand 2 - Measure 2.2 Networks of Towns
Decision No 2017-1310/00-001
Reference No 588829-CITIZ-1-2017-1-PL-CITIZ-NT
Project for the period 2017 – 2018

PROJECT TITLE : *Tolerance and solidarity as core values for the future of Europe*

EVENT NUMBER: 2

TOPIC: *Tolerance. Reasons and results coming from intolerance
Combating negative stereotypes and narrow-minded attitudes*

DATE: 14/09/2017 - 18/09 2017

PARTICIPANTS: 53 participants

Participated municipalities:

1. Cisse, France - 1 participant
2. Desborough, United Kingdom - 2 participants
3. Hepstedt, Germany - 2 participants
4. Ibanesti, Romania - 4 participants
5. Lassesee, Austria - 20 participants
6. Medzev, Slovakia - 4 participants
7. Moravce, Slovenia - 4 participants
8. Nagycenk, Hungary - 4 participants
9. Estonia, Polva - 4 participants
10. Strzyzow, Poland - 4 participants
11. Zagare, Lithuania - 4 participants



During the time from the 14th of September to the 18th of September 2017, the Adults meeting took place in Lasseë, Austria. The meeting in Lasseë was the second one of the current adult program of the European Charter.

For these reason 53 people from different countries and local participants met and spent 4 days together in Austria. There were invited 4 persons from all invited countries. Some participated countries could not send full delegation. Those delegations with the lower number than 4 participants were replaced by local participants. 18 host families from Lasseë provided accommodation in their houses and spent free time with participants.

What is our Charter?

The Charter of Rural Communities was founded in 1989 in Cissé, France. Its main goal is to enforce the cooperation between small rural communities all over Europe. This cooperation is built on exchanges and meetings of people in the different countries. Therefore there are organized several meetings during the year, where people visit a municipality and stay there at host families in order to get to know each other's way of life better. Every member state of the EU has also one member in Charter.

Lasseë in the Charter

Lasseë is the Austrian member of the Charter and already hosted 2 meetings. One big summer meeting in 2007 and one Adult meeting in 2014. The meeting in 2014 was the closing meeting of the multiannual project 2013-2014. So at this meeting there were delegations from each charter member.

Currently the Mayor from Lasseë, DI Karl Grammanitsch, is the President of the Charter.



PROGRAMME OF THE MEETING

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|------------------------------|--|
| Thursday (14.09.2017) | Arrival day |
| Friday (15.09.2017) | Welcome - Workshop in the town hall Workshops's moderator: Ikenna Okafor Topic: <i>Tolerance. Reasons and results coming from intolerance. Combating negative stereotypes and narrow-minded attitudes.</i> Part 1. National stereotypes Part 2. <i>When life hands you a lemon...peel it</i> Part 3. <i>All That We Share</i> Departure to Orth/Donau (Nationalpark) Dinner in Lasseer (Heuriger) |
| Saturday (16.09.2017) | Departure to Vienna (optional) Village festival (optional) in the Europapark Culinary evening in the Europapark (open air) |
| Sunday (17.09.2017) | Holy Mass Free time with host families Goodbye Party with the Host families in the Golf Restaurant Schönfeld |
| Monday (18.09.2017) | Departure |



THURSDAY 14/09/2017 - Arrival day.

On Thursday the 14th of September all delegations arrived in Lassee, got some basic information about the plan of the meeting, filled out the delegation forms and then went to the host families.

Some delegations arrived by car, some by airplane. For the delegations who arrived by plane, there was a special shuttle service from the train station Bad Deutsch Altenburg.

FRIDAY 15/09/2017 - First day of the meeting.

Workshop (in Town Hall)

On Friday there was the Workshop about tolerance and how to combat the negative aspects of intolerance in Europe. The Workshop started at 9.00 am and took place in the Town Hall. Therefore all the members were asked to write down what they think about the countries that were joining the meeting. At the end of the first part of the Workshop all the results were compared. So it was possible to see what people think about particular countries. In that way it was also shown that there are some kind of stereotypes that lead to intolerance.

After a short coffee break the second part of the Workshop began with the so called "lemon game". Therefore people had to say very spontaneous what they think about lemons. And after that people were discussing.

The third part of the training included short movie projection and discussion about the problem of negative stereotypes and narrow-minded attitudes.

The workshop was moderated by the local priest from Lassee, Dr. Ikenna Okafur. He also confronted to intolerance at the beginning of his work in Lassee as he comes from Nigeria and now he could share also his personal experience. Participants demonstrated high involvement in exercises and discussions during the workshops.

The detailed description of the workshops can be found in part workshops' results.

At 12.00 there was the lunch time at the local Restaurant *Grün*. After lunch there was a boat trip.

Boat trip on the Danube (dinghy):

After lunch, at 1.00 pm, a bus took all the delegations to Orth/Donau, where they started the boat trip on the Danube through the Nationalpark. For this trip 10 persons were sitting in one boat. This



trip was also a challenge for cooperation between people of different nationalities and speaking different languages. The instructors from Nationalpark were just giving instructions to participants but coordinating them the way when the boat follows was their task and depended on successful communication and cooperation. All groups paid attention to one aim - to finish the trip in a safe way.

Dinner at "Heurigen":

After that trip, at around 6.00 pm the delegations went back to Lassee, and at 7.00 the day ended with the visit of a typical Austrian Heurigen.

Saturday 16/09/2017 - Second day of the meeting.

Trip to Vienna:

On Saturday morning there was the possibility to visit the City of Vienna, or to stay in Lassee and visit the village festival. The majority of participants decided to visit Vienna. They met at 8.00 am at the railway station, and went to Vienna by train. They arrived at about 9.30 am in Vienna and visited the center of the city and the most important buildings, such as St. Stephen's Cathedrale and the Opera house. The people were guided by family Leban and Helene Ruelens, who wore Tracht - traditional Austrian clothes. At 2.00 pm participants came back to Lassee, and they spent some free time with host families.

Culinary evening:

On Saturday there was the village festival in Lassee. During that festival people from Lassee had the chance to learn more about local associations, artists and institutions. There was also the possibility to try traditional Austrian food and drinks and products taken by invited participants. Charter members met earlier and prepared some food and drinks, characteristic for their municipalities and countries. All participants and many inhabitants of Lassee spend time together, tasting food from many countries, listen to the music and just integrating.

Sunday 17/09/2017 - Last day of the meeting.

Holy Mass:



On Sunday, there was the holy mass at 8.30 am. All the delegations gathered in church and celebrated together with inhabitants of Lasseë. Each country also read out one prayer in their own language and placed their national flags in a vase on the altar. So at the end of the mass there were 10 flags on the altar.

After the mass, the delegations had the possibility to spend the day with their host families.

Goodbye Dinner:

At 7.00 pm there was the final dinner at the *Golfclub Restaurant* at Schönfeld. The Mayor of Lasseë and President of Charter of European Rural Communities summed up the results of this event, thanked everybody for coming to Lasseë and wished all of the delegations a safe trip home. Every delegation got a small present from the Municipality of Lasseë.

Monday 18/09/2017 - Departure day.

On Monday, participants summarized the meeting, left Lasseë and started their trip home again.

WORKSHOPS' RESULTS

The topic of the event in Lasseë was *Cultural diversity – Tolerance. Reasons and results coming from intolerance. Combating negative stereotypes and narrow-minded attitudes* consisted one of the 6 topics included within the project *Tolerance and solidarity as core values for the future of Europe*. The moderator of the workshops was Ikenna Okafor.

The first task of the workshops was to find stereotypes which are popular for particular nationalities. Firstly participants worked in their national groups. Their task was to describe stereotypes about their own countries. They listed stereotypes including both negative and positive ones. All groups located their results on the boards. After this part, participants were randomly divided into several groups. Each group consisted of participants from different countries. The next task was to describe stereotypes about each of the nationality participated in this meeting and workshop. In this way all attended nationalities were described. The final part of this activity was the presentation of these results and discussion. Participants were given a chance to comment and discuss presented stereotypes. They also answered to the following questions:



- Are these stereotypes true or not?
- Do most people hold the same stereotypes about a particular nationality in your group? Why or why not?
- Why do stereotypes exist?
- How do stereotypes affect your behavior toward others?

The second part of the workshop was used to take participants deeper into the question of identifying prejudice. In this aim workshop moderators use the activity “When life hands you a lemon...peel it”. The main aim of this task was to provide a visual representation of the similarities and commonalities between peoples. Participants were split into three groups. Each participant was given one lemon. Then they were instructed to “get to know their lemon”. Participants examined their lemons in as many different ways as possible, touching, smelling and rolling them around. After 5 minutes they put them back in one basket. Next, they were asked to find their lemons. Most of the participants recognized their lemons the first time round. They described the recognized lemons. Responses of participants differed, e.g. “My lemon had some dents”, “My lemon had some bruises”, “My lemon was a small lemon”, etc. However after peeling the lemons, participants claimed that they looked all the same. These answers were used to start a discussion of diversity. The final conclusion of the discussion was that even if on the surface people can appear to differ more or less significantly, inside they are all the same.

Another important part of the workshops was the projection of the movie about stereotypes. The title of the movie was "All That We Share" and it was produced in Denmark by their television TV2. The action took place in the studio where there were drawn several boxes on the floor. Participants of different ages and backgrounds were separated into groups, e.g. "high earners" or "those who are just getting by". At first glance it could appear that there is no doubt that they belong to these groups. However, when the narrator asked them more specific questions, e.g. "Who are stepparents?" or "Who've been bullied?", the groups quickly broke up. People who identified themselves within the asked questions came out of their boxes and moved to the box in the middle of the room. The movie is very popular in Denmark it has already gained over 4 millions views on YouTube. This short film provoked discussion among participants about our negative feelings and attitudes, tendency to create barriers and divisions. The final conclusion was



that it can be very easy to find a common ground with people who seem to be very different than we are and it just required the attitude full of open-mindedness.

During the workshop the participants learnt a lot about stereotypes, its reasons and negative effects.

The most important results of the workshop are:

- gain of awareness and understanding of other cultures and countries by fostering mutual understanding;
- activation of local inhabitants;
- participants learnt how to use intercultural dialogue as a tool in combating intolerance towards other cultures, religions and nationalities;
- exploration of European values such as human rights, active citizenship, participation and good practices as a common base for future cooperation within the Association “Charter of European Rural Communities”
- exchange of experience in promoting intercultural understanding and tolerance;
- gaining new knowledge about such terms as prejudice;

PUBLICITY/PROMOTION

- More pictures and impressions of this meeting can be found online on www.europeancharter.eu . On this site there is also the calendar of all the meetings that are part of the Project 2017-2018.
- Also on Facebook some people posted photos and videos of the meeting.