



GOLDEN STARS AWARDS 2010

EUROPE FOR CITIZENS PROGRAMME

The book of the awarded projects

People matter in the life of the European Union. No political project can advance while leaving the people behind. Our Union can only exist and prosper if citizens adhere to it and support it.

At the start of the European project back in the 50s, Europeans emerging from some of the darkest times in our history united around the prospect of lasting peace and prosperity. This was the cement that gave the European project its legitimacy and support.

As the European Union develops further, we must aim to perpetuate this level of support among the new generations. This is a challenge. The 20th century is, after all, something they read about in their history books! They will need their own reasons for supporting the European project.

The European Union has European women, men and children firmly at its centre. The European Union has become about the political commitment to make their daily lives better and easier. About giving people safer food products; about having common standards for medicines; about promoting the rights and safety of air passengers and protecting the rights of consumers; about making sure our bathing waters and beaches are clean; about passport-free travel for millions of Europeans... And yes, about cheaper mobile phone calls and SMS!

The Lisbon Treaty and the legally binding force of the European Union Charter of Fundamental Rights have marked a real watershed: these texts underscore the vital role of citizens in advancing the European project. It gives them new opportunities to speak to the European institutions. And it challenges the EU institutions to create a real Citizens' Europe.

In his Political Guidelines of September 2009, President Barroso himself outlined his vision of «a Europe that puts people at the heart of the policy agenda.» He called for efforts to give concrete effect to citizens' rights and to revitalise the link between citizens and the European Union.

By creating a «justice, fundamental rights and citizenship portfolio» in the European Commission, President Barroso has entrusted me to make EU proposals meaningful to citizens. I am determined to make citizens' rights a tangible reality and to remove the existing obstacles preventing citizens to enjoy their rights.

And we have already started to put the Lisbon Treaty into concrete action.

At the end of October, I presented an important milestone on the road towards a Citizens' Europe – the EU Citizenship Report 2010. This report takes a fresh approach in addressing cross-border problems from a citizen perspective. It looks at the existing obstacles for Europeans who wish to exercise their rights and outlines clear steps to remove those obstacles. It is the start of a broader process to place people's concerns on the political agenda and making citizens' rights more effective in practice.

It is also in this context that 2011 has been declared the European Year of Volunteering. 2011 will be the opportunity to highlight the efforts of millions of Europeans who take part in activities for the betterment of their communities. It is the solidarity and the rich fabric of civil society that makes Europe a unique place.

The Europe for Citizens programme, which supported the projects awarded the Golden Stars, is a good vehicle to help placing citizens at the centre of European Union. It is encouraging to see this rich mosaic of projects covering many aspects of civic life. It is gratifying to see that the Europe for Citizens programme makes a difference to individual beneficiaries, whilst simultaneously building lasting partnerships across Europe.

My most sincere congratulations to all participants in the projects, and to all those who made them possible, for their contribution to our common ambition of making the European Union a better place.

Viviane Reding

Vice-President of the European Commission, Commissioner for Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship



INTRODUCTION

The European Commission awards the Golden Stars to give recognition to projects that have been particularly successful within the Europe for Citizens programme. The selected projects will encourage and inspire other organisations and European citizens to develop and engage in similarly interesting projects in the future.

The selection of the winners

The European Commission evaluated a large sample of high-quality projects funded by the Europe for Citizens programme in 2009. These projects are representative of the main actions and measures launched under the programme. The evaluators analysed the projects, taking into account the programme's long-term and annual priorities.

A shortlist of 18 projects that best corresponded to these priorities was presented to a jury. The jury was composed of the following members:

- Chair of the Jury, Mr Staffan Nilsson, President of Economic and Social Committee
- Gräfin von Thun und Hohenstein, Member of the European Parliament
- Mr Frédéric Vallier, Secretary General of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR),
- Ms Christine Wingert, Europe for Citizens Contact Point Germany

The jury chose 8 projects to receive a Golden Stars Award. The result is a well-balanced selection of projects illustrating good practice for each of the actions of the Europe for Citizens programme. All project categories are represented in the Golden Stars Awards: town twinning, civil society, and remembrance projects.

The winners of the European Commission's Golden Stars Awards 2010 are:

05 - 12

TOWN TWINNING PROJECTS

- 04 - 05** Municipality of Osthrammar (Sweden) for the citizens' meeting 'Energy and Sustainable Development from a Baltic Sea Perspective' with partners from Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Poland, Slovakia, Germany and Belgium.
- 06 - 07** Municipality of Tarragona (Spain) for the citizens' meeting 'European Youth Games 2010' with partners from Italy, the Czech Republic, France and Austria.
- 08 - 09** Municipality of Haaren (Netherlands) for the networking project 'European Charter of Rural Communities' with partners from all European Union Member States.
- 10 - 11** Municipality of Malle (Belgium) for the networking project 'Golden Bridge' with partners from Germany, Poland, United Kingdom and France.

12 - 15

CIVIL SOCIETY PROJECTS

- 12 - 13** Yourope for Rights: Active Citizenship in Europe, between human rights and immigration policies, an Italian project of the Servizio Civile Internazionale Italia Onlus, with partners from Poland, Slovenia and Greece.
- 14 - 15** L'Europe en Cours/Europe in progress, a French project of Crysalis, with partners from Italy, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Poland and Romania.

16 - 19

REMEMBRANCE PROJECTS

- 16 - 17** Train of Remembrance, a German project of the organisation Zug der Erinnerung e.V.
- 18 - 19** The Forgotten Roma Holocaust, a Hungarian project of the Roma Press Centre Association.



TOWN TWINNING PROJECTS

Municipality of Osthhammar (Sweden)
CITIZENS' MEETING 'ENERGY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
FROM A BALTIC SEA PERSPECTIVE'



Themes

- Energy and environment.
- Sustainable development.
- Local action in climate strategies.

Geography

The meeting was organised by the municipality of Osthhammar (Sweden) and involved partner municipalities from Finland (Orimattila and Uusikaupunki), Estonia (Valga), Latvia (Valka), Poland (Kobylnica and Koscielisko), Slovakia (Tvrdošín), Germany (Weissenburg) and Belgium (Durbuy).

Activities

This town twinning meeting was organised during the Swedish Presidency of the EU. The twinned municipalities from eight European Union Member States came together to discuss the issues of sustainable development, energy and environment and to enshrine the conclusions of their debate in the form of a declaration, signed on a sailing ship in the harbour of Öregrund and addressed to the representatives of states and governments participating at the United Nations climate change conference in Copenhagen.

This declaration is the result of a long-standing and constantly growing cooperation in areas such as the environment, social affairs, culture, education and tourism. Representatives of the twinned communities meet once a year and in between work together on various EU-related projects.

Participants/Audience

Over 120 people participated in the town twinning meeting and the debate. At least half of the participants were young, as one of the leading principles of this European cooperation venture is to involve the generation of young Europeans. The young people presented examples of sustainable development at local level, such as recycling, transport solutions, water economy and energy solutions.

Results

This project is an expression of the strong involvement of citizens at local level in global issues. It gives them an opportunity to have their voices heard at international level and to exercise their citizenship to the full. The meeting led to an intensive exchange of experience and knowledge between the heads of the environmental departments and energy advisors in the various municipalities as well as between municipal administrators and citizens, with a view to new projects involving the twinned communities.

The event was reported not only in the local press but also on Swedish radio and television.



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TOWN TWINNING PROJECTS

Municipality of Tarragona (Spain)
CITIZENS' MEETING 'EUROPEAN YOUTH GAMES 2010'



Themes

- Bringing Europe closer to the younger generation in local communities across Europe.
- Enhancing mutual understanding and tolerance and promoting cultural and linguistic diversity through sport.
- Promoting sport for people with disabilities.

Geography

The meeting was organised by the municipality of Tarragona (Spain) and involved partner towns from Italy (Siena and Pompei), the Czech Republic (Pisek), France (Avignon, Orleans and Le Puy en Velay), Austria (Klagenfurt), Germany (Wetzlar), Serbia (Pancevo) and Andorra (Encamp).

Activities

The 'Sister Cities Youth Games' go back almost forty years when the Spanish town of Tortosa and the French municipality of Avignon twinned up. Some years later, Tortosa proposed to its French partner a way of strengthening the twinning relationship by involving young people in the form of a sports event.

After the other twin towns enthusiastically embraced the proposal, the first games were held in 1972, involving all partner towns. Participants had to be 14 to 18 years of age and the sports included athletics, handball and swimming.

Participants/Audience

Over 100 people from the majority of twin towns participated in the games and accompanying activities. Many senior citizens participated as volunteers in organising the event.

Results

This town twinning meeting was marked by high-quality implementation, a remarkable level of participation across different age groups, and interaction among different actors from the local community as well as the other partner municipalities.

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TOWN TWINNING PROJECTS

Municipality of Haaren (Netherlands)

NETWORKING PROJECT 'EUROPEAN CHARTER OF RURAL COMMUNITIES'



Themes

- Participation in local democracy.
- Local policies for the disabled, education, and employment.
- Involvement of young people.
- Organisation of Friends of Europe twinning associations

Geography

The networking project was organised by the municipality of Haaren (Netherlands) and involved partner municipalities from all Member States of the European Union.

Activities

Since 1989, the European Charter of Rural Communities has brought together 27 rural communities from all 27 EU Member States. This extensive network has chosen to focus on 'liveability in European communities' and to examine its various aspects including education, employment, integration of people with disabilities, participation in democracy at local level, involving young people in community life, and giving them an opportunity to learn about Europe and their fellow Europeans under the motto 'meet Europe for free'.

The motto of the Charter as a whole is 'people meet people' and this is reflected in the way meetings between Charter members are organised. When possible, participants stay in a host family and thus have the chance to get to know their counterparts 'at the kitchen table' and to learn about their way of life. This exercise aims to remove stereotypes and broaden horizons in the context of a rich mosaic of multilateral, bilateral, individual and professional contacts.

A major network meeting is organised every year, accompanied by specialised thematic meetings for specific target groups.

Participants/Audience

This networking project brings together a large number of European citizens from many different walks of life and across different age groups.

Results

One of the results of the project is an overview of the way participation in local democracy is organised in different European countries. Another result is a DVD made by the youth participants in the Charter's activities. The DVD has been developed with the aim to encourage young people's interest in Europe in general and in Charter in particular. One of the lasting results is a network of Friends of Europe twinning committees, which have been established in a number of Charter members. Their aim is to ensure continuing mutual cooperation between the partner communities even if the local political situation changes.

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TOWN TWINNING PROJECTS

Municipality of Malle (Belgium)
NETWORKING PROJECT 'GOLDEN BRIDGE'



Themes

- Environment.
- Social entrepreneurship.
- Cultural heritage, amateur art, photography and music.

Geography

This network of twinned towns was initiated and led by the municipality of Malle (Belgium) and involved partner municipalities from Germany (Heusenstamm), Poland (Zakrzówek), United Kingdom (Hartley Wintney) and France (Saint-Savin).

Activities

The project consists of a many-faceted stream of activities, including photo exhibitions and amateur art competitions organised in all of the partner towns, the publication of local tales accompanied by 'Twin and Twan' illustrations (designed by schoolchildren from one of the participating communities), and the recycling of bottle corks to be used as insulation material in a local social enterprise.

The highlight of the project was the composition of a European twinning hymn with the support of five professional composers from the participating countries. The hymn was performed for the first time in public at the cathedral in Lier, Belgium, on Europe Day, 9 May 2010 before an audience consisting of guests from Malle's four twin towns. One day, the people of Malle hope to perform it before the European Parliament.

Participants/Audience

This very dynamic twinning project brought together a considerable number of Europeans of different ages and professional backgrounds, including local entrepreneurs, musicians, teachers, school children and students.

Results

Many of the activities pioneered by the project are now firmly anchored in the local cultural and economic life of the participating communities. Cooperation continues and is likely to develop into new areas.

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CIVIL SOCIETY PROJECTS

Servizio Civile Internazionale Italia

PROJECT 'YOUROPE FOR RIGHTS: ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP IN EUROPE
BETWEEN HUMAN RIGHTS AND IMMIRATION POLICIES'



Themes

- Immigration policy.
- Immigrants/refugees.
- Promotion of volunteering.

Geography

This project was initiated and coordinated by an Italian organisation and involved partner organisations from Slovenia, Poland, Germany and Greece.

Activities

According to estimates, immigrants in the European Union today number about 40 million. This is both an opportunity and a challenge. The project therefore focused on the issue of social cohesion and on the need to manage immigration while respecting the human rights of those fleeing persecution, war or violence in general.

The project tried to address both issues at several levels: by giving structured opportunities for personal interaction and mutual knowledge for the parties involved (local people feeling threatened by the presence of immigrants, asylum seekers, refugees), by stimulating participants to actively engage in finding and creating opportunities for further interaction after the project and by formulating proposals addressed to EU policy makers dealing with the challenges of immigration.

Participants/Audience

This project was initiated by a partnership of several volunteer organisations and brought together an extensive pool of volunteers, who not only debated a very relevant policy issue but engaged in concrete help and interaction with people of an immigrant background. Immigrants were actively engaged in all project activities, from participation in specific events to dissemination of project results.

Results

One lasting outcome will be a publication and CD-ROM with contributions from all the partners, providing tools for further awareness raising and projects in the area of immigration and asylum. A website will serve as a tool for communication with the wider public and as a platform for exchange between the project partners.

In several locations such as Rome, the project received extensive media coverage thanks to a high number of people taking part in the project events (more than 500 participants in three day-long event).

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CIVIL SOCIETY PROJECTS

Crysalis (France)
PROJECT 'L'EUROPE EN COURS/EUROPE IN PROGRESS'



Themes

- Education
- European identity
- European citizenship

Geography

This project was initiated by the French organisation Crysalis and brought together partners from seven European Union countries, including Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, France, Italy, Poland and Romania.

Activities

The project is a follow-up to 'Euro-Chantier: Lycéens, citoyens européens!', a project launched in 2007-2008 to create a prototype educational manual on how to teach European citizenship to secondary school students (15-18 years old). The manual was developed in close cooperation with around 40 students.

The aim of the new project, 'Europe in progress', is to give final shape to the prototype conceived in 2008. After an initial period devoted to analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the prototype and how to improve it further, fifteen European students at master and PhD level met for one week in Marseille, in March 2010, to propose changes to the draft text and to produce a final version of the manual. The manual is currently being finalised, based on the proposals. The manual will then be translated, tested with a pilot group of students, edited, and distributed in the seven countries participating in the project and beyond.

Participants/Audience

In its initial stage, the project brought together around 40 students from seven EU Member States with the aim of reaching a significant audience of teachers, pupils and students across the European Union.

Results

Teacher training is planned to instruct teachers in how to use the manual as a tool to involve learners as active participants in education. Subsequently, several 'Euro-Chantier' events will be organised to bring this education project in the field of European citizenship to school, college and university students.

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REMEMBRANCE PROJECTS

Zug der Erinnerung e.V.
PROJECT 'TRAIN OF REMEMBRANCE'



photo: © Matthias Winkler



photo: © Simon Engelbertz

Themes

- Holocaust remembrance
- Deportation of children and young people

Geography

This is a German project with links to other European countries — especially Poland.

Activities

The Train of Remembrance is a project commemorating children and young people from many European countries deported to concentration and extermination camps during the Second World War. The number of children and young people who fell victim to the Nazi regime and who were deported to concentration and extermination camps by the 'Deutsche Reichsbahn' (German state railways) is estimated to be 1.5 million.

The exhibition, held within real train carriages drawn by a steam engine, displays the biographies of young victims from Belgium, France, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway and the former Soviet Union. The exhibition also pays tribute to the aid provided by allied anti-Nazi forces, such as the transport of children to Great Britain, which saved the lives of approximately 10 000 children and young people.

Participants/Audience

Until now the train visited over 100 railway stations attracting 380 000 visitors. In some of the stations the train arrives at the very same platform from which people were deported during World War II thus underlying the link between the exhibition and the cruel reality of those dark times.

Results

The exhibition drew attention to a particular aspect of the holocaust: the deportation and extermination of children and young people. It revealed the real nature of this tragic and shameful period of Europe's modern history and brought it to the attention of large numbers of today's European citizens.

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photo: © Karin Richert



REMEMBRANCE PROJECTS

Roma Press Centre Association
PROJECT 'FORGOTTEN ROMA HOLOCAUST'



Themes

- Roma holocaust

Geography

Given its nature, this is a Hungarian-based project.

Activities

The Roma holocaust is relatively little known and receives relatively less attention in depictions of Nazi extermination policy. The actual number of Roma genocide victims during the Second World War is difficult to assess, but estimates range from 220 000 to 1 500 000. According to academic research, almost the entire Roma population in Croatia, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Luxembourg and the Netherlands was exterminated.

This project seeks to uncover, document and digitise the testimonies of Roma holocaust survivors in order to raise awareness of Porrajmos, as the Roma holocaust is called. Porrajmos is a relatively unknown and unacknowledged phenomenon in Hungarian society, even within the Roma community. 28 000 to 33 000 of the estimated Roma population of 70 000 to 100 000 were deported from Hungary during the Second World War to the extermination camps.

Participants/Audience

This project focuses on recording oral testimonies, documents and information concerning the genocide of the Roma in Hungary. The information will be available to professional historians as well as the general public, with the aim of increasing awareness of this sad chapter of modern European history.

Results

The project will result in a collection of testimonies and information that will help increase knowledge of the racist and xenophobic policies leading to the Roma genocide during World War II and will record, and thus preserve for the future, the fate of individual victims.

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