



Education and Culture DG

'Europe for Citizens' Programme



# ACTIVE EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP GOLDEN STARS AWARDS 2007

The book of the awarded projects  
Town twinning and civil society projects

Europe for citizens Forum - Together for Intercultural dialogue  
Brussels, 8 November 2007



## The Golden Stars Awards

The Europe for Citizens programme promotes active European citizenship. It addresses local authorities, civil society organisations and other stakeholders who are ready to develop activities providing the Citizens with opportunities participate in constructing Europe together. The Golden Stars award is a recognition given annually to projects which have been particularly successful and which therefore can provide good examples and source of inspiration to the others.

### How the selection was made

The selection was made by a Jury involving members of the European Parliament, the Committee of the Regions and the Economic and Social Committee as well as experts from the field.

The jury considered the overall quality of the projects and their match with the priorities of the Europe for Citizens programme, particularly the most topical issues such intercultural dialogue, new forms of citizens' participation and equal opportunities.

The jury also wanted the selection to reflect the diversity of projects and activities in the field and to include good examples of celebration of the 9th of May as well as examples of the so-called "cross-fertilisation" between the different actions of the programme.

## And the winners of 2007 are

### Civil Society Project

- **European Forum - Learning In Immigration Societies: For Human Rights Oriented Democracy in Europe** (Netzwerk Migration Europa, DE)
- **How to become an active European citizen?** (Centrum pro komunitni praci stredni Morava, CZ)
- **Communicating EU Values across Greece** (Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy, GR)
- **The Baltic adventure! Youth travelling on the roads of enlargement** (Europahuset Gävleborg, SE)
- **Overcoming irritations and prejudices between people of different cultures, religions and convictions in the EU enlargement process"** (United Religions Initiative Europe AISBL, DE)

### Town Twinning Project

- **Conservation of energy and natural resources** (Town of Nether Kellet, UK)
- **"Enfants du Pays, parents de l'Europe" une même citoyenneté malgré la diversité des origines** (Town of Le Coudray St Germer, FR)
- **Citizens Together - Without Borders** (Town of Tekovske Luzany, SK)
- **Europe Week** (Town of Hennef, DE)
- **The days of Europe 2006 - Solidarity in Europe, hundreds of ideas, thousands of friendship"** (Town of Wągrowiec, PL)

# Golden Stars Winners: Active citizenship for intercultural dialogue



The European Union, now and over the coming years, must engage with one of the major social and political challenges facing us at home and

in the world - the need to develop and nourish intercultural dialogue to help resolve the tensions that can result from differences or frictions between cultures. The European Commission is responding by encouraging a continuous dialogue between peoples and cultures in different EU countries. That's why the "Europe for Citizens" programme supports civil society and the town-twinning movement in a huge range of projects that trade ideas and experiences, stretching out hands of friendship across borders. Participants in the projects not only feel that they get to know and understand each other better, but they gain a sense of creating a larger European family based on common values such as tolerance, equal opportunities and democratic dialogue.

These are the fundamental principles behind the ten projects awarded "Golden Stars of Active European Citizenship" for 2007.

These projects show how important and necessary it is, for all generations and nationalities, to throw the spotlight on Europe, on our collective achievements and our common challenges. With their emphasis on dialogue, reflection and shared action, they exemplify a common consciousness grounded in European values.

The engagement of civil society organisations and local communities in constructing a 'Europe of neighbours' offers a counter-argument to the criticism we sometimes hear, of Europe as a technocratic, centralising undertaking. The projects bear witness to the emergence of a genuine political consciousness and a shared European identity. By getting actively involved in the debates and reflections about the EU, Europeans of all ages develop links - links between individuals, local civil society organisations, NGOs or with the representatives of EU institutions. These new bonds in turn spur people on to develop a European dimension to their civic engagement.

These ten projects have been identified by the European Commission for their innovative character, their enthusiasm, and especially because they offer such good examples for potential project organisers. They epitomise a Europe which inspires, unites and spreads the message of tolerance and mutual understanding.

I would like to offer warmest congratulations to the ten "Golden Stars of European Citizenship". The commitment which these projects embody will inspire many similar, successful efforts to build a "Europe for Citizens".

**Ján Figel'**

Commissioner for Education,  
Training, Culture and Youth

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Jan Figel'. The signature is stylized and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

# Inter cultural dialogue in practice

European Union is a place where different peoples and cultures intersect. In order to build a democratic Europe based on shared values, a "public space" for getting together, debating and exchanging opinions is indispensable. Such a public space is also essential element of preventing and fighting against discrimination of any kind wherever it still persists.

The founding fathers of European Union based the European project on an ambition of achieving lasting peace and tolerance among the European nations and indeed the Europeans now live in peace with each other and enjoy many benefits and freedoms which are the result of decades of European integration. However, we still too often hear the news about tensions between communities in the same country and too often immigration into Europe is used as the scapegoat for all the social and political problems facing the European societies.

The projects presented in this brochure have actively contributed to better co-operation and mutual understanding among the Europeans as well as to a development of a common European identity uniting Europeans of different nationalities. Inter-cultural dialogue which is one of the key features of many of the projects included in this brochure proved its considerable potential to foster the feeling of being European among the projects participants and consequently among the European citizens.

The following projects were successful in a different manner in mobilising individual Europeans around these issues.

## Civil Society Project

### NETZWERK MIGRATION EUROPE

### EUROPEAN FORUM - LEARNING IN IMMIGRATION SOCIETIES: FOR HUMAN RIGHTS ORIENTED DEMOCRACY IN EUROPE



**Remember the past and learn from the history to build the common future...**

#### THEMES

Historical dimension of human rights violation - forced labour, expulsion, forced migration and holocaust

European systems of human rights protection and the role of NGOs

Three generations of human rights and European Human Rights Convention

Co-existence in multicultural and multiethnic societies

## DESCRIPTION

How to construct truly multicultural and multiethnic, democratic Europe learning from its past experience? The project of Netzwerk Migration Europe put this question in the centre of reflection for young people, youth workers, school teachers and other multipliers of different nationalities. The participants of the four seminars held in Berlin, Warsaw and Prague were confronted with European past through the direct testimonies, visit to places of Holocaust, the memorial of forced labour and migration, memorial of murdered Jews, films and other information about the history of exile, expulsion and forced labour. They also discussed the contemporary migration problems. The analysis of human rights legal instruments and provisions served as a link between the past, presence and the possible recommendations for future.

## METHODS AND IMPACT

The special training materials about immigration, asylum and relevant international and European Human Rights instruments were developed for the participants. Moreover, the different experts provided a good

balance of theoretical and practical aspects of human rights protection. The project ensured dissemination of results, multiplier effect and possibility to develop a further networking. The results of the project discussions and findings were published in a booklet about migration, asylum and human rights - "Migrants, Refugees and Human Rights Resource Book". It is addressed to NGOs, human rights practitioners and students in the field of European citizenship to be at the disposal to those interested in understanding the European past and learning about key legal instruments with relations to migrants. In the end, the European Forum for learning in immigration societies for human rights-oriented consciousness was established to continue to exchange the ideas on those very important subjects.

## ► CONTACT DETAILS

Dr. Anne von Oswald, Berlin

Tel.: +49 030 84 109 267

E-mail: [info@network-migration.org](mailto:info@network-migration.org)

web: [www.network-migration.org](http://www.network-migration.org)

This project demonstrates the capacity of individual Europeans to deliberate in a constructive manner on a complex issue which concerns all the Member States.



*""European Active Citizenship" means for us active participation, dialogue and exchange in social and political life in Europe, multiperspective on common European issues as identity, migration, history and memory, learning and acting in terms of social, economic, cultural and political equality and justice"*

**Network Migration Europe project**

The establishment of the European Forum enabled a creation of a knowledge base contributing to better understanding of the issues related to exile and immigration among the general public. Each of the project participants became an ambassador of tolerance in his or her native country.

The project of the United Religious Initiatives (URI) association provided an opportunity to people of different faith to meet around the same table and to discuss prejudices faced by religious communities around Europe.

*According to us "European Active Citizenship" means "That people from different regions and cultural and religious traditions get to know each other and share their values and dreams for a peaceful, pluralistic Europe".*

**URI Project**



As in the previous case, the experience of a dialogue contributed to easing of the social tensions linked to the differences of religious beliefs. Due to this experience there are new "apostles of tolerance" in our societies.

## Civil Society Project

**UNITED RELIGIOUS INITIATIVE EUROPE (U.R.I.)  
OVERCOMING IRRITATIONS AND PREJUDICES BETWEEN  
PEOPLE OF DIFFERENT CULTURES, RELIGIONS AND  
CONVICTIONS IN THE EU ENLARGEMENT PROCESS**



### Respecting others conviction and religions in multicultural Europe...

#### THEMES

Interfaith dialogue and the best practises of inter-faith work  
Prejudices between European citizens of different convictions and religions  
Mutual understanding and respect  
The European Union and its processes

#### DESCRIPTION

How to deepen understanding and promote mutual respect of Europeans of different religions, convictions and beliefs? United Religions Initiative (URI) is an active network which promotes lasting, daily interfaith cooperation and which represents more than 100 religions, spiritual expressions and indigenous traditions. The awarded project included a European conference, where the participants were given an opportunity to share their views, expand their knowledge about other faith communities and traditions as well as to understand related historical, social and political backgrounds. The organisers ensured the good representation of countries, ages, gender and of all major religious organisations, faiths, and denominations, including humanist. The participants had therefore a chance to discuss and verify their fears and

prejudices and to exchange the best practises on interfaith dialogue. Moreover, through the visit of the EU institutions and the meetings with EU experts their project had a significant European dimension. This gave them an opportunity to discuss the role of religion in Europe and to further their interests in the European Union and its processes.

#### METHODS AND IMPACT

This project offered a possibility for creating new links between the people from different European countries with a special accent on bringing together the "New" and "Old" Member States citizens. The conference proposed the different formats for interaction such as workshop in small groups, spontaneous presentation of best practices by participants, common reflections as well as the study visits and debates with experts. The key activists in the inter-religious and inter-faith dialogue invited on the conference by URI network provided a strong multiplier effect. During the event, the strengthening and expansion of the URI network in Europe was also discussed. A high-quality conference report was produced and later on distributed Europe-wide and world-wide through the networks and media thus having a strong dissemination effect.

#### ► CONTACT

Karimah Katja Stauch  
Tel.: +49(0)228-23 04 76 - E-mail: [dmlbonn@aol.com](mailto:dmlbonn@aol.com)  
Web: [www.uri.org](http://www.uri.org)

This project opens new horizons for the inter-cultural dialogue. The URI network has expanded and grew stronger, new website for the URI Europe network was created to provide a permanent platform for exchange of information within the network. The following project "Citizens Together - Without Borders" similarly brings the urge to exchange opinions and information to the local level.

## Town Twinning Project

TEKOVSKÉ LUŽANY (SK) WITH  
 BATASZEK (HU), DITRAU (RO), QUAREGNON (BE),  
 NEWTON ABBOT (UK), BESIGHEIM (DE), AY CHAMPAGNE (FR),  
 CONDE SUR L'ESCAUT (BE), KAMPEN (NL)  
 "CITIZENS TOGETHER - WITHOUT BORDERS"



## Bringing together the peoples of Europe...

### THEMES

- Fight against racism, xenophobia
- Integrating minorities
- Non-discrimination

### DESCRIPTION

How can the EU citizens confront the local problems which touch upon the universal European values? In this multilateral town-twinning meeting organised by municipality of Tekovske Luzany in Slovakia, the representatives of invited towns, local authorities, civil society and religious organisations together with local citizens discussed the challenges related to integration of minorities in the host societies as

well as the role and position of women of minority background. The issues of racism and xenophobia are of great importance for multicultural European society and Tekovske Luzany and Bataszek have considerable historical experience with minorities. During debates with politicians, participants shared their views, exchanged the good practises and formed the recommendations for future. They identified education as a key to integration of minorities and empowerment of women in the local societies.

The other important topic of the meeting concerned the benefits of town twinning networking. The host town Tekovske Luzany and its long-standing partner Bataszek presented its past cooperation to the other invited towns. Both towns come from new EU member states and therefore represent a particular town-twinning tradition. All invited towns were discussing the possibility of further expansion of existing partnerships. This was possible through the particular system of connections: Tekovske Luzany is twinned with Bataszek which is twinned with German town of Besigheim, which has a partnership with the other invited towns. All the present towns examined the outcomes of past and opportunities for futur cooperation. It was agreed that exchanges will be organised not only between the representatives of local authorities but also the civil society.

#### METHODS AND IMPACT

This multilateral exchange looked at important European issues from a local perspective and in the same time it had a strong networking character. The participating towns decided that they will meet at least once per year to work more effectively on the areas of common concerns. The plans for interregional projects were established. Participants from the invited towns and local inhabitants, especially young people were engaged

through different activities - debates, meetings as well as intensive sports and cultural activities.

#### ► CONTACT

Mrs. Margareta Szabó (Törökova)

Tel.: +421 905 164 423 or +421 911 700 790

E-mail: greti@post.sk or tmgreta@yahoo.com

www.tekovskeluzany.sk

This project reveals that the European Union is a living example of sharing common history and dealing collectively with common challenges. This is especially important as many Europeans see European Union as a distant and centralised bureaucracy. The low turn-out in the European elections reflects this perceived distance between the local interests and European integration process.



*"We were able to find out that although we live in different parts of Europe, using different languages, together, hand in hand we are a big family".*

Project of Tekovske Luzany

The project presented above is therefore an important illustration of many similar initiatives taking place at a local level through which Europe becomes more real in the eyes of European citizens.

## Making Europe tangible

To make Europe more concrete concept for European citizens is a significant challenge. Through working together regardless of national origin and through learning about the achievements of EU policies this challenge can be met.

The following projects provide a good example of such an approach.

On the occasion of the Day of Europe which is commemorated each year on May 9 number of debates in different Member States take place. These debates contribute to better understanding of the idea of Europe among the Europeans. This is the case of the town-twinning project "Europe Week" in which the young participants had an opportunity to "transform" themselves into the representatives of their respective countries in order to discuss "chocolate directive". The public debate which followed as well as participation of the members of the European Parliament in the debate gave these future European citizens a real opportunity to get a better grasp of the European decision-making (policy) process.



## Town Twinning Project

HENNEF (DE) WITH  
BANBURY (UK), LE PECQ (FR), NOWY DWÓR GDAŃSKY (PL)  
"EUROPE WEEK"



## Together to celebrate Europe...

### THEMES

Enlarged EU  
Education,  
Services directive  
Local economy  
Cultural diversity

### DESCRIPTION

How to make the celebration of 9th of May - Europe Day attractive and visible to a large public on the local level? German town Hennef organised together with its twinned towns - Banbury (United Kingdom), Le Pecq (France) and Nowy Dwór Gdański (Poland) a colourful, European Week, during which one could see, feel, hear, debate and "practice" the EU. The key to success was the mobilisation of a large number of stakeholders: local associations, schools, institutions and business. Thanks to this almost seventy different events were organised during the Week. Some of them addressed specific target groups like young people, school children or artists and certainly provided something for every taste.

The "learning" activities had an objective to enhance knowledge of the European Union. The public debate on EU topics with several Members of

the European Parliament was organised and attracted large public. Young people could discover the work of the European institutions through the role game in which they took the role of EU decision makers and negotiated a "chocolate directive".

The cultural events aimed in showing and sharing the richness of the European local traditions. For example a specially designed European musical involved 14 choirs and 350 singers of different nationalities. The libretto presented all EU Member States and was partly played in original languages. Finally the outdoor, sport-related activities promoted among the participants such values as tolerance, non-discrimination and non-violence.

The Europe Week in Hennef was visible for everybody: shops and house windows were dressed with EU themes and the local media showed a great interest in and provided lots of publicity for the celebrations.

### METHODS AND IMPACT

The design of the week combined a good mixture activities focused on European issues attractive to a large public. Engagement of local associations and local institutions provided the necessary know how and the potential for large mobilisation. Though the carefully planned series of educational and festive activities, more than 1200 people participated in the Europe Week and learned about European Union and about its different local cultures.

### ► CONTACT DETAILS

Ms Erika Rollenske

Tel: +49 22 42 74 67 - E-mail: nc-rollenul@netcologne.de

Web: www.hennef.de





**"Współpraca, Przyjaźń i Zaangażowanie w działalność europejską, tak w skrócie możemy określić pojęcie Aktywnego Europejskiego Obywatelstwa "**

*Co-operation, Friendship and Engagement in the European integration, these are three words which illustrate Active European Citizenship for us.*

### Project of Wągrowiec city

The following project "The Days of Europe 2006" in a similar fashion as, "Europe Week" celebrates through a series of high profile local events the Day of Europe.

By focusing on the issue of solidarity between cultures and individuals this town-twinning project offered more than 5,000 participants an opportunity to challenge the stereotypes related to nationalities or disabilities.

## Town Twinning Project

WĄGROWIEC (PL), ADENDORF (DE), SCHÖNWALDE (DE), GYULA (HU),  
LE PLESSIS TREVISE (FR)

"THE DAYS OF EUROPE 2006 - SOLIDARITY IN EUROPE,  
HUNDREDS OF IDEAS, THOUSANDS OF FRIENDSHIP"



## European solidarity in action...

### THEMES

- European solidarity in the cooperation between local self-governments
- Strengthening and development of current partnerships
- Elimination of biases and stereotypes
- Integration of disabled people in the society

### DESCRIPTION

How to consider issues of European solidarity within a context of local communities? Almost 5000 participants - inhabitants of the host and invited towns, among them disabled people, representatives of local authorities and of local organisations participated together in the Days of Europe 2006 in Wągrowiec. The cultural and festive activities served as a background for demonstrating the outcomes of cooperation between all invited towns, initiating new contacts and strengthening the existing partnerships. Representatives of Wągrowiec, Adendorf and Schönwalde showed the effects of mutual cooperation, presented jointly carried projects to their friends from Hungary, France and Russia. During the meeting there was a further expansion of contacts as a new twinning

partnership was signed between Wągrowiec and le Plessis-Trevis. The European integration spirit was present during all week. The local authorities of Wągrowiec placed this small town into the European context by official opening of the town's official website [www.wagrowiec.eu](http://www.wagrowiec.eu). The meeting was an important step towards building a network of small town and counties and expanding the scope of cooperation of towns. The project demonstrated very good mobilisation and "cross-fertilisation" capacity. During the entire event, there was an intensive cooperation between municipality, civil society organisations and the Municipal European Integration Centre.

#### METHODS AND IMPACT

The Days of Europe consisted of 3 blocks. A conference block was devoted to exchanging town twinning working methods, presenting the possibilities of applying for EU funds, analysing existing and potential

networking opportunities and elaborating the joint projects. The wide variety of tools were used including expert and multimedia presentations, and debates. The organisers put a special accent not only on the solidarity between towns but also on integration of disabled people in the local communities. A cultural block consisted of photo exhibition presenting the cultural heritage and diversity in Europe, concerts and performances by artistic groups from all invited countries, classical concert "Across Europe with a baton" and a presentation "Across Europe with cultures". Finally, a sport block involved the participants from invited towns, including the people with disabilities, in sporting Europe events.

#### ► CONTACT DETAILS

Mr. Waldemar Piechowiak, Mr. Łukasz Cieślak  
 Tel: + 48 67 26 80 332, +48 67 26 80 332  
 E-mail: : [promocja@wagrowiec.eu](mailto:promocja@wagrowiec.eu) / [l.cieslak@wagrowiec.eu](mailto:l.cieslak@wagrowiec.eu)  
 Web: [www.wagrowiec.eu](http://www.wagrowiec.eu)

The new partnership agreements which were concluded in the course of the event gave these municipalities of a small and medium size a major European dimension. Similarly, through public debates in the neighbourhoods where the European integration is not a priori a part of an everyday discourse, the project "Communicating EU Values across Greece" achieved to explain the impact of European policies large groups of populations.

### Civil Society Project

**ELIAMEP - HELLENIC FOUNDATION FOR EUROPEAN AND FOREIGN POLICY (EL)**  
**"COMMUNICATING EU VALUES ACROSS GREECE"**



## Fostering European debate on EU values and active European citizenship

### THEMES

Raising awareness of EU values and of the future of the EU  
European citizenship in connection with intercultural dialogue and tolerance  
Immigrants, integration and diversity  
The role of media in creating a European public space

### DESCRIPTION

How to encourage the national debate on issues concerning migration, the values and future of the European Union and active European citizenship? The Greek Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Affairs succeeded by placing the media and key personalities in the centre of the events and providing broad media coverage of all the organised events. A strong multiplier effect for the Greek population was achieved through an intensive collaboration with diverse stakeholders. The first series of public meetings was organised in six major Greek cities in cooperation with the local authorities, main universities and local civil society actors. During the open discussions, the participants touched upon such issues as European citizenship and democracy, cultural and ethnic diversity and the future of the EU. The results of these meetings reached the semi-urban population, local minorities and the significant students' population. The second stage consisted of the workshop organised together with immigrants associations. The EU values and active civic participation were discussed in the context of social and cultural inclusion of the minorities in the host

societies. This permitted to develop the substantial discussion on challenges of tolerance and intercultural dialogue in Europe. Final project event involved the journalists and media representatives in the debate on the topic of "Communicating Europe". The invited guests were reflecting together on the role of media in the creation of European public space. All the events combined lectures of experts, meetings and exchanges of opinions with open debates.

### METHODS AND IMPACT

In order to reach the main immigrants' populations the Foundation produced the easy-reader booklet "Europe: a community of values" printed in 10.000 copies in Greek, Albanian, Bulgarian and Russian languages. The brochure was distributed by the Foundation during the events and to the immigrants associations, the Greek Council of Refugees and students. The special accent in this project was put on the educating journalists on EU affairs and enhancing the capacity to disseminate the information about the EU through the large mobilization of media. The Foundation established also a close cooperation with the local authorities and universities, immigrants associations as well as the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the European Commission and the European Parliament Office in Athens.

### ► CONTACT

Mrs Christianna Karageorgopoulou  
Tel.: +30 210 7257 125  
E-mail: [christianna@eliamep.gr](mailto:christianna@eliamep.gr)  
Web: [www.eliamep.gr](http://www.eliamep.gr)

The civil society projects awarded this year bear witness to the growing readiness of the European citizens to discuss Europe related issues. The large number of discussion groups which were established in all corners of the European Union gives a signal of an emergence of a political conscience which can be capitalized by the European Commission, members of the European Parliament and also by the local authorities' representatives in their communities, municipalities or regions.

The project "Enfant du pays, parents d'Europe" focused on exploring local cultures in European context. The immersion into the culture of their counterparts enabled the participants to better understand the national differences as well as similarities. The visit to the European parliament in Brussels by the project participants has further encouraged the international dialogue between them. These future European citizens who had an opportunity to familiarise themselves with the functioning of the European institutions can also become interlocutors towards the preceding as well as the following generations.



## Town Twinning Project

LE COUDRAY ST GERMER (FR), TRSTENA (SK)

"ENFANTS DU PAYS, PARENTS DE L'EUROPE - UNE MÊME CITOYENNETÉ DANS LA DIVERSITÉ DES ORIGINES"



### Prepare the future by creating a sense of common belonging...

#### THEMES

European citizenship and the sense of common belonging  
Inter-cultural and inter-generational dialogue  
Role of young generations in building mutual understanding in enlarged European Union  
Integration between New and Old Member States

#### DESCRIPTION

How the young Europeans from different countries can find out that they belong together to the European Union? During an intensive 15 days exchange Slovak pupils and their relatives came to France and discovered that despite geographical distance and different origins they actually share more than they think. Through the different types of activities they learned about cultural richness and diversity in Europe. A series of events were organised in local school, where during one week Slovak and French pupils were studying together and organising the European week. This immersion to school system mobilised all students to take an active part in discovering European Union. They prepared the expositions about enlargement, panorama of the EU and European

citizenship, organised round tables, European debates and information campaigns. To participants also enriched their understanding of European integration through the study visits. This included the Jean Monnet House in Houjarray, the Slovak Embassy in Paris and a trip to the European Parliament in Brussels, where the young people and their families had a chance to discover the EU institutions. Finally, the cultural events allowed the participants to find out about the local culture, traditions, food and specialities of the Pays de Bras through the games, musical events and typical dinners.

#### METHODS AND IMPACT

This town-twinning project used a full spectrum of methodological tools. The school joint activities served as learning-by-doing exercises. The study visits made the European integration ideas more tangible and served as an illustration of the work of the EU institutions. Sharing was made stronger by involving host families. The Slovaks became familiar with the everyday life of people in the host French village and the idea of direct intercultural dialogue thus became more concrete. Finally, involvement of young people, their parents and grandparents gave everyone a possibility to experience the intergenerational dialogue.

#### ► CONTACT DETAILS

Mme Jeannine Dumont  
Tel.: +33 3 44 80 21 34, +33 616 80 27 62  
E-mail: jeannine.pfeiffer@wanadoo.fr

The preceding projects hold a significant European dimension and proved the capacity of local authorities as well as the civil society organisations to engage Europeans in an exercise of active European citizenship.

## Learning and multiplying Active European Citizenship

There is not a single definition of active European citizenship. The world of academia, civil society organisations and the individual citizens can use different definitions to arrive to the same point/concept. However, two key words are always present when we talk about active European citizenship. These are: participation and respect for each other.

The three following projects give to these somewhat abstract words a real meaning.

The project "How to become an active European citizen?" is an illustration of a logical link between the concepts of respect, participation and democratic dialogue.



*"Evropské aktivní občanství lze výstižně definovat citátem, jenž vznikl v souvislosti s udržitelným rozvojem.  
"Jednej lokálně, myslí globálně."*

*"Active European citizenship can be well defined by the slogan "Act locally, think globally""*

**Centre for Community Organizing Middle Morava project**

Czech NGO Centrum pro komunitní práci střední Morava" and the national Ministry of Education successfully worked together to develop new approaches and learning methods on European affairs for the elementary and secondary school students and their teachers. Participative pedagogical approach encouraged active and critical engagement of the project participants who consequently acted as a catalyst of a stronger interest in Europe in their respective municipalities and communities.

### Civil Society Project

**CENTRE FOR COMMUNITY ORGANIZING MIDDLE MORAVA (CZ)**  
**"HOW TO BECOME AN ACTIVE EUROPEAN CITIZEN?"**



## Learning Europe...

### THEMES

Active European citizenship  
New participatory methods of teaching about the EU  
Civic education

### DESCRIPTION

How can we make the civic education about the European Union more attractive for young people? In this project the Centre for Community Organizing Moravia worked together with citizens associations CIVITAS, school teachers and students to design the innovative and participatory methods of teaching civic education programs at primary and secondary schools. Coming from "new" member state, Czech people have limited experience in being active EU citizens. Therefore, the main objective of the project was to spread knowledge about EU, raise awareness on how to involve in the EU decision making process and promote citizens participation and initiative.

The design, production and implementation required very detailed and carefully methodology. Firstly, the pilot schools were selected and the project website was created to provide information about the projects and links to the European resources. Secondly, the training module "How to become an active European citizen?" was developed. The subjects undertaken concerned knowledge, skills and experience that active citizens should have. The training module served as a background for developing the training methodology for teachers, in the form of study books and worksheets. It explained them how to apply in classes the new civic education module. After being presented on the workshop, both modules were implemented in pilot schools. During an academic year, students could learn for example what is and how to contact the European Ombudsman, where to find European resources,

how they can take part in the EU consultation process etc. The designing and implementation phase were followed by a nation-wide competition in which students designed their projects focusing on EU influence in their own community. The students were encouraged to identify the issues they found most critical and to propose a solution. For example they prepared and carried out a survey "What do people know about EU in our town?" or designed a project to be funded through EU structural funds to the benefit of their town. The two winning projects were sent on a visit to the European Parliament in Strasbourg. The group also consisted of students with disabilities, the intention being to provide a practical opportunity for all the students to understand equal opportunities policy. Finally, a national dissemination conference was held to discuss the results of the project and to highlight new approaches of teaching about EU.

### METHODS AND IMPACT

Designing this new civic education module gave a possibility to teachers to enlarge the existing education plans about knowledge about EU. Appreciating a very good cooperation between project leader, experts, teachers and students the Ministry of Education certified the new civic education module. It could be thus integrated into the mainstream school curriculum. During the project, the regular contacts with media were maintained. The specialised teacher journals, major national newspapers as well as press releases published on the website helped to spread information about the project.

### ► CONTACT DETAILS

Contact for Middle Moravia - Director: Roman Haken  
Tel.: +420 777 793 711 - Email: roman.haken@cpcp.cz  
Contact for Middle Bohemia - Project manager: Ondřej Marek  
Tel.: +420 777 793 737 - Email: ondrej.marek@cpcp.cz  
web: www.cpcp.cz



*Téměř ve všech projektech, které se účastnily této soutěže toto zamyšlení ústilo v nadějně očekávání a víru ve smysl evropské integrace.*

*In all the projects which participated in the competition, the conviction that the European integration has a profound importance for the future of Europe has increased*

**Centre for Community Organizing Middle Morava project**

The project "Baltic adventure" brought together the young generation of Europeans in the same participative spirit to experience the issue of EU enlargement. Study trips helping to better understand their neighbours were organised and as a consequence a democratic conscience developed providing a strong promise for the future of the European Union. The project participants spontaneously became "ambassadors" of Europe.

The most positive aspect of this project was a strong commitment of the project participants to share their experience acquired in the course of the project with their peers.

## Civil Society Project

EUROPAHUSET (SE)

"THE BALTIC ADVENTURE! YOUTH TRAVELLING  
ON THE ROADS OF ENLARGEMENT"



### Discovering Europe...

#### THEMES

EU enlargement

Active European citizenship of young people / young active European citizens

EU fundamental rights and citizenship of the EU

Making young people's voice heard in Europe

#### DESCRIPTION

How to empower young people to be the active citizens in the enlarged European Union? The Swedish organisation the Europe House let the young people from four Baltic countries to find out their right and discover other EU countries.

The 1-year project was structured in four stages. First, preparatory phase concentrated on recruitment of young people, schools and partner organisations, who could take part in the project. The youngsters were chosen by the school teachers, students' councils and partner organisations - Youth Initiative Support Centre (Latvia), the Europe House (Lithuania), NGO Europe House (Estonia). In the second, knowledge building phase, participants followed the preparatory courses. They went through the intercultural training and teambuilding sessions, the

seminars on the EU and fundamental rights and citizenship of the Union as well as the blocks about the knowledge about their respective countries. The third phase consisted of fact-finding missions - a trip to Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia for Swedish participants and a trip to Sweden for Baltic participants. During those tours young people visited schools, hospitals, local organisations, students' councils, national institutions and other places of interests. In the last, disseminative phase young people come back to their countries, produced information materials, acquired communication skills and carried out the information campaigns in their schools about what they had learnt and discovered.

#### METHODS AND IMPACT

This project managed to engage actively 41 young people from four different Baltic states and educate them about their respective cultures as well as EU values and rights. It allowed them to acquire practical knowledge and empowered those young people to act as multipliers in their milieus. As an effect, around 2,500 pupils in schools in Sweden and Baltic were reached. The Europe House ensured an extensive exploitation and dissemination of the results projects through the articles in local press, specially designed poster of the Baltic Adventure, PPT presentations and organisation's website.

#### ► CONTACT

Mr. Åke Söderman

Tel.: +46 26 276700, +46 26 600160

E-mail: ake.soderman@abf.se

web: www.europahuset.se

These future European citizens had an opportunity to get acquainted with the issue of enlargement in a very intimate manner and thus naturally became a source of information in their own school environment. Thus a considerable number of young Europeans have been indirectly involved in the project.



*"In the evaluations we made, everyone mentioned there new understanding for Europe and young peoples life in different countries and the sense of being a part of something bigger".*

**Europahuset project**

The following project is a very good example of an action based on environmental concern. Twinned communities from United Kingdom and France shared their experiences on the issues of environmental protection and sustainable development. A collective concern for the protection of the environment at the local level emerged as a consequence of this project as an emphasis was put on each participant's responsibility in meeting the challenge of preserving the environment.

The different generations of participants involved in this project gained a better knowledge of environmental issues and better understanding that the challenge of preserving the environment does not have only national but significant European and indeed planetary dimension and that each individual is concerned. They have also developed necessary skills to take their own action. Raising the awareness about environmental issues has for many years been a major challenge for the European Union. Concern for the protection of the environment is without any doubt one of major elements of the active European citizenship.

## Town Twinning Project

**NETHER KELLET (UK), BUSSIÈRES/LOIRE (FR)**

**"CONSERVATION OF ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
AND ITS IMPACT ON THE DAILY LIVES OF EUROPEANS"**





## Building common responsibility for Europe...

### THEMES

Sustainable development, re-cycling, energy and conservation of natural resources

The effects of European funding on local conservation projects

The work of local, national and European institutions and services

### DESCRIPTION

How to demonstrate a common EU concern in the local context? The participants of this town twinning exchange decided to tackle the problems of energy, natural resources conservation and waste-disposal - the issues which touch directly every local community. In addition they looked at the working of local, national and European institutions and services with the aim of increasing active citizenship and European awareness among the local population.

The main objective was to provide the participants a practical insight on the topics of the meeting. Guest from French village Bussieres together with their English friends visited the National Wildflower Centre at Liverpool, a nature reserve where endangered and commoner species are produced and conserved. They had also a chance to see the Wigan Pier - an example of recycled redundant buildings as well as the wind farm and refuse disposal site to learn about re-cycling and energy conservation.

Apart from practical experience the participants had a chance to discuss the energy issues with a British Deputy to the European Parliament, who gave a talk from the viewpoint of the EU Energy Policy. During the debate the participants not only had a chance to compare attitudes in each country towards renewable energy and waste - disposal and discuss the effects of European funding on local conservation projects but they could also fit in into a larger European debate. The open discussion attracted the participants of the exchange and a big number of local inhabitants who took up in the discussion other European issues as well.

### METHODS AND IMPACT

This project mobilised the people from both villages around the important ecologic issues. It allowed them to see their pertinent local problems in a wider context thanks to the presence of local, national and European politicians. This was a practical illustration of interdependence of local, national and European affairs. Through the practical examples, exchange of experience and debates participants could find the solution and compare the good practises. The French people become more familiar with the day to day life of Nether Kellet thanks to living in the host families and intensive, joined cultural programme.

### ► CONTACT

Ms Judith M. Bentham

Tel.: +44 1524 734 624

E-mail: [jbj@nkellet.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:jbj@nkellet.fsnet.co.uk) / [info@netherkellet.com](mailto:info@netherkellet.com)

Preceding projects demonstrated different avenues of encouraging Europeans to become active European citizens by developing respect to their European neighbours and by getting involved in the public life.



*And who will be  
the Golden Stars winners 2008?*



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