



Europe
for Citizens

The project «Peacefully side by side in Europe V. Halászi Summer Festival» 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 230 citizens, notably 20 participants from the city of Berg (**Austria**), 35 participants from the city of Tomasov (**Slovakia**), 40 participants from the city of Dealu (**Romania**), 35 participants from the city of Cristuru Secuiesc (**Romania**) and 100 participants from the city of Halaszi (**Hungary**).

Location/ Dates: The event took place in Halaszi (**Hungary**), from 15/08/2014 to 17/08/2014.

Short description:

The town twinning program started on 15th August. After the arrival of the foreign guests the different groups welcomed each other and got to know the detailed program during a reception. Then the individual self-governments reported on their social, economic and cultural activities and achievements in the last year and on future aspirations, too. The following programs focused on history and actual political issues of Europe. We recalled the grueling World War I period, the partners described how the events took place in their own territories, what outstanding and important events occurred during in their region. Thus, we got better acquainted with the history of the partner settlements. Afterwards, contemporary European values and issues were dealt with, both elderly and younger people were included in the workshop, which provided an opportunity for the participants to express their views on today's coexistence between nations and peace efforts. During the discussion interesting opinions were expressed on the subject. The day was closed by the joyful atmosphere of a street dance party.

August 16th, 2014

Saturday program started in the spirit of EU membership. The twin settlements explained the meaning and benefits of the 10 years that have passed since their EU accession at a round-table discussion. They listed both positive and negative experiences and there was opportunity to compare the roles of individual member states and municipalities in today's democratic life of the EU. During the discussion we also presented the implemented EU grant projects, which are major benefits of the 10-year membership.

Sports lovers could match their skills at a mini tournament held with the participation of different age groups. The matches, of course, were attended by representatives of the partners, too, which facilitated the creation of stronger connections between the settlements.

During the afternoon the participants could compare their angling skills at another competition. This program point, spent in a pleasant weather and good mood, proved to be one of the most successful project activities. The traditional fish soup cooking competition was thematically related to it, in which the teams prepared the favourite meal of Szigetköz and several other regions. In the culinary program the partners offered a taste of those foods that are popular in their settlement.

In the evening the main attention was directed to culture and folk values were given great space. Folklore became popularized in different forms: the traditionalist groups of partners performed, presented their folk costumes, songs and dances. The dance house was also held in the spirit of maintaining traditions, where young and old could learn the basics of folk dance. Thus, in addition to the multi-cultural outlook the dance house also had community-building functions. In the joint activity the participants came into contact with the cultural heritage of our ancestors directly, in a relaxed atmosphere.

August 17th, 2014

In the morning the locals and the guests from the twin town participated in an ecumenical church service. It took place in the local Catholic church and its specificity was given by the international involvement. After the ceremonial church service we held a commemorative act including festive wreath-laying ceremony, the apropos of which were provided by the revolutionary events of 1956. Younger people learned about the aspects of local history, the older ones revived their personal experiences from this period.

The voluntary blood donation organized by the local Red Cross association proved to be a great success. In the afternoon, we opened the exhibition which was realized with the involvement of school children of the partner settlements. The theme was inspiring and thought provoking, as the task was to display by drawings and paintings how young people imagine Europe in 100 years. Not only did they get to know each other's talents, but they could also present their particular way of seeing and ideas. Interesting discussions, debates emerged concerning what is expected on European level in the coming years. After the meaningful program point a short evaluation occurred, in which the partners draw the lesson of the days past, summarized the meeting and commented the jointly implemented program. During the moments of farewell they assured each other of further cooperation and friendly support.