



Kőszeg Town Twinning Association successfully applied for support under Europe for Citizens, Network of Towns. The acronym of the project is EULOCAL which stands for “Even Us the Little Ones Count A Lot”.

In the project there are 5 partners representing little or large countries, towns. The coordinator is Kőszeg Town Twinning Association – acting on behalf of Town Kőszeg, and the partners are Stadt Bad Kötzting, Marsaskala Local Government, Douzelage Chojna, and Association Tratti from Velletri, Italy.

Our main aim is to convince people: being in EU is rather advantageous. In a family it is obvious, that even the little counts. What about the society: in a town, a country or in the EU? Do small nations, small countries count? Are they important for the EU? Is the European Union important for us? Will it collapse like Roman Empire has? Will there be new exits? All of us meet these kind of questions day by day. The answer is difficult, if we would like to give it without demagoguery and prejudice. It is particularly important to discuss these issues with young people, who are inexperienced, and don't know how the European Union works. The aim of our project is to help the citizens – particularly the young ones – to think about these questions. Participants will discuss most of the above-mentioned questions in detail, but instead of explicit methods we rather use implicit ones, using proper methods we hopefully can give right answers. The proper methods are the most efficient ones: workshops, simulations, debate, exhibition, or in some cases lectures, study visits. These actions all will help participants to realize that in EU also the small countries are important. With different activities we also will prove how important the cultural diversity is, and how the decision makers support small, almost forgotten languages, like Maltese. The other aim is to emphasize how important each single – even little – action is to reach a common goal in our neighborhood and consequently in the whole Europe. This is true for each individual action (like environment protection, voluntary work – even the smallest one etc.), but also in case of the decision-making process locally or even at European level – like rotation of the EU presidency. Even the composition of this network reflects our aims: some partners are from large countries, like Germany, Italy, Poland, and small ones like Malta and Hungary. Special target group is youth as their future, life will be in the EU.

The project – besides the preparation and dissemination – consists of 5 events, one in each partner towns. The first event was organized by Marsaskala Local Council, where Mayor Mario Calleja and his colleagues, friends prepared a perfect program for the 30 official participants, 15 of which were from Germany, Hungary, Italy and Poland.

The conference was opened by Mr. Mario Calleja, mayor of town Marsaskala. As it was planned, on the first evening we had exhibition where we showed examples for the benefit of being the members of the EU.

Next morning after the daily opening by Mr. Mario Calleja the coordinator of the project, Dr. István Mátrai introduced the program and its importance. The conference was honored by Dr. Owen Bonnici, Minister of Justice, Culture and Local Government. In his speech he

emphasized the importance of the European Union, and also gave examples for the benefit of the Maltese membership.

Each partner organization gave a short presentation about their “local problems” which will be discussed during their events.

Kőszeg, Hungary talked about the importance of involving all entities to save and protect water.

Chojna, Poland presented the attitude of local participants and foreign visitors towards work abroad, particularly in small town.

Velletri, Italy gave presentation about new walls in Europe and new Europeans: young people born in Italy by foreign parents.

Bad Kötzting, Germany highlighted the problems of bee keeping.

Marsaskala, Malta mentioned the attitude of local participants and foreign visitors towards importance of a very small, isolated country, almost forgotten language.

After this we had discussion and debate about the questions: Do little countries count in the EU? Do they have the same rights? The discussion and debate were organized in groups, and afterwards a spokesman/woman summarized the opinion of each group. Finally, a common point of view was formed by the participants.

Even the lunch and the short break contributed to the aim of the project: The international cuisine was an example of the cultural diversity, and gave the chance to exchange ideas, get acquainted informally etc. After the lunch – taking into consideration the healthy lifestyle – we walked to the Douzelage monument, where a group photo was taken.

In the afternoon the participants took part in workshops in 5 international groups. It was well organized, because each nation was responsible for one topic. The topics were the followings: Advantages and disadvantages of being little (HU); Young ones in politics (PL); Immigration (IT); Young ones in sports (DE); Heritage, development and the young generation (MT). After the workshops each group leader summarized the outcomes and answered the topic related questions of other participants.

The tiring day was closed by a gala dinner with cultural event. We had the chance to listen to Maltese traditional music, and we could enjoy the performance of two young singers. Also, all nations were asked to take their national music, so we could listen to them, too.

The last day of the conference was a field trip to Gozo, the sister island of Malta. The whole day excellently proved the advantages and disadvantages of being little, and being isolated. All participants admired our “tour guides” John and Charlot, who talked about the cultural heritage, traditions, geographical and historical features of the small island.

After the fieldtrip – which was an excellent example for informal learning – we got together to summarize our experiences. The conversation continued during the dinner.

All outcomes, the summaries, and photos will be published in the web site of all partner towns. Next meeting will be held in Velletri, Italy, in the middle of April.