

The project « Future of young in Europe » 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 80 citizens, notably 29 participants from the city of Amaroni (Italy), 51 participants from the city of Lukovica (Slovenia).

Location/ Dates: The event took place in Lukovica (Lukovica, Slovenia), from 20/9/2018 to 23/9/2018.

Short description:

The day of 20/9/2018 was dedicated to reception of guests, presentation of participants, creating social connections and networking between participants. There were introductory speeches of hosted Mayor of Municipality of Lukovica Mr. Matej Kotnik and guested Mayor of Municipality of Amaroni Mr. Luigi Ruggiero. They both emphasized the importance of that day as a result of the twinning of municipalities in September 2016. Hereinafter there were also speeches of presidents of town twinning committees of both communities. Mr. Tomaž Andrejka emphasized main activities of the project EU Youth in the next few days, which will be most co-shaped by pupils of both elementary schools. Mrs. Anna Giampà enthusiastically welcomed our cooperation as the result of many years of engagement after finding partners for mutual cooperation. There was also a speech of headmaster of Janko Kersnik Brdo Primary School Mrs. Anja Podlesnik Fetih who welcomed all in the name of school, pupils and hosted families.

The day of 21/9/2018 was dedicated to activities at Janko Kersnik Brdo Primary School and its surroundings in the morning, study visits in Ljubljana in the afternoon and to get acquainted with local traditions in the evening. Headmaster and pupils of Janko Kersnik Brdo Primary School prepared a short reception for the guests. Participants were divided in two groups for visiting school library and hospitations for classes of lower and higher primary school level. Participants could see the differences in education process between two primary schools. At the same time pupils went on workshops where they were familiarized with preparation of e-album, writing impressions, photographing and short presentations of essays on topics on Future of young in Europe and challenging Euroscepticism. Presentations of essays on Future of young in Europe and challenging Euroscepticism were very short and pupils time for presentation was limited, so some of pupils had to present their essay in the evening because of lacking time. For the next two activities participants were divided into two groups: one group went on guided tour of Brdo, where pupils of Janko Kersnik Brdo Primary School presented the most important cultural heritage Castle Brdo with its park, where lived our writer Janko Kersnik and then they visited local bidder with experimental orchard of apples. Head of orchard Mr. Mavec introduced the meaning of orchard on national level, presenting varieties of fruits in orchard and emphasized the meaning of bees for existence of orchard in general. An idea of joint project in the future between Italian and Slovenian beekeepers came out at that certain point. At the same time at Janko Kersnik Brdo Primary School a round table for selection of two essays took place. Commission consisted of teachers and members of the twinning committees selected one best Slovenian (written by Uroš Pogačar) and one best Italian (written by Maria Teresa Olivadoti) essay. In the afternoon participants went on study visits in Ljubljana. At first, participants visited House of European Union in Ljubljana where European Union was presented by a guide Mrs. Maja Kranjc Todorović who acquainted them also with meaning European Union in Slovenia in 2018. Later in the afternoon participants went on a study visit in capital of Slovenia and were acquainted with the meaning of capital of Slovenia with its important institutions, buildings and cultural heritage that is important for Slovenia and in European level (for example: Slovenian Parliament, Trg republike Square, Kongresni trg Square).

At the end of second day a local association "Turistično društvo Sv. Vid" in order to realize the differences between two municipalities and two different cultures, prepared evening of local traditional games. Participants were acquainted with two traditional games and their rules: pulling the rope and throwing horseshoes. Those social games were also to strengthen friendship between participants.

The day of 22/9/2018 was dedicated to the most important activity of the project EU Youth: lecture by a member of EU Parliament Mr. Alojz Peterle on topics: advantages and disadvantages of working of youth in EU, policy making-process in EU by developing citizens' understanding and a discussion on the future of EU and challenging Euroscepticism. Before that we had an introduction with cultural program where the European anthem "Ode to Joy" was sang and local men's choir "Moški pevski zbor KD Janko Kersnik" sang a song about bees and song "Triglav" named after Slovenian highest mountain. The choir chose the song about bees because bees and honey were the main reason why Municipality of Amaroni found Municipality of Lukovica for partnership in town twinning. Afterward two chosen essays were presented by Uroš Pogačar and Maria Teresa Olivadoti. Two best written essays got a symbolic award - a book "No bees, no life" given from both mayors of Municipality of Lukovica and Amaroni. Participants through presented chosen essays got a new perspective about being a European citizen from eyes of young person. Mr. Alojz Peterle in his lecture told us that it is important for countries and municipalities to cooperate together in joint projects. He doesn't want to see divided Europe once again. He presented to youngsters in order to be aware of meaning of European Union benefits a minor example of difference in life he lived before and after Slovenia joined European Union: Slovenia became a member of European Union in 2004, before that year, when he was travelling to Brussels, he needed to pass border control for three times and he needed to change currency for three times. Today he can travel around European Union states only with ID and one currency. MEP Mr. Alojz Peterle gave participants also a positive contribution on issues concerning advantages and disadvantages of young people's work in the EU and helped Euroscepticism and citizens' comprehension to broaden cultural horizons of education in European citizenship. Participants got information on better understanding of EU future and a clear information to all Eurosceptics. Participants have been encouraged to attend EU elections in 2019. Hereinafter presentation and promotion of program Europe for Citizens and European Solidarity Corps was held. Participants were acquainted with the role of municipalities and partners in the different strands and measures of program Europe for Citizens and then also with new job opportunities or volunteering for young between 18 and 30. Participants were for the first time acquainted with ESC as a new way of cooperating with young. Next two activities were held at the same time: a press conference and a workshop for elaborated draft of e-album and workshop about differences and similarities between two municipalities as challenges and solutions for future development changes. Workshop started with presentation of both municipalities through promotional films. Participants were acquainted with differences of both municipalities through natural and cultural heritage, environment, activities, local stakeholders, education, people know-how, culinary and habits. Participants were aware that differences between two cultures and environment do exist, but those differences are opportunities for young to "taste" them through exchanging programs for widening their horizons. In that part of activities participants got a conclusion of importance of improving their knowledge in foreign languages, being connected with local companies, stakeholders, bidders and not to emigrate from hometown. Solution for problems pupils saw in European joint projects, because if you have a chance for comparing your environment with foreign one, you can love your environment and what it offers, more. At the press conference representatives of both municipalities and schools informed general public through medias about project and about meaning of cooperation between municipalities and schools. MEP Mr. Alojz Peterle emphasized cooperation presented between Municipality of Lukovica and Municipality of Amaroni as the essence of the European Union. He also emphasized that Europe's future depends on young people, as they will be able to bring together all European nations. Mr. Matej Kotnik and Mr. Luigi Ruggiero, both Mayors of twinned municipalities, were satisfied with cooperation between municipalities because understanding the differences between 1400 km distant places is absolutely necessary, as you can only appreciate what you have at home and discover new developments that widen the horizons. Mr. Tomaž Andrejka, president of the twinning committee in the municipality of Lukovica, was very enthusiastic about cooperation, despite the initial skepticism, he said that the door is opened and behind them are hiding people with a heart who are the true face of Europe. Mrs. Anna Giampà, president of the twinning committee in the municipality of Amaroni, enthusiastically said that the idea of twinning was born in 2013, and after five years they are in love with Lukovica, Slovenia. They love Slovenian cultural heritage, they have developed friendly ties, they feel us as brothers, and this solid bond is important for everyone. Mrs. Anja Podlesnik Fetih said that elementary school of Janko Kersnik Brdo actively participated in this project and that Calabria was a heart-warming experience for all the participating pupils and companions. She also said that this is a moment that we are returning the experience to our friends from the city of Amaroni. The objectives of the school are also clear, which

within the project encourages students to think about cooperation, coexistence, advantages of the European Union, an active citizen, who is aware of his duties, to think about the improvement of life, the overcoming of diversity. If we unite the thoughts, the goal is globally good for everyone. The school will continue the project with Erasmus+, upgrading the cooperation so far. In the afternoon participants went on a study visit through municipality of Lukovica. At first, they were acquainted with historical importance of settlement Trojane, and then took place also presentation of one local biggest company "Gostinsko podjetje Trojane" known by giant doughnuts ("Trojanski krofi") all around Europe and as an important local employer. Participants next stop was in Krašnja, where local association "KUD Fran Maselj Podlimbarski" has a museum collection of cultural heritage and folk tradition. They could also saw an ethnological collection, memorial room of local poet Peter Levec, objects made of knitted straws sets (hats, bars, slippers and nowadays also jewellery), photographs and documents. After we took a walk through Krašnja, where Mrs. Vera Beguš as president of "KUD Fran Maselj Podlimbarski" presented participants the most important houses in Krašnja where traditional handcraft or craft was or it is still present today. In the central part of Krašnja a local firefighter association "Prostovoljno gasilsko društvo Krašnja" accepted us. Participants got a presentation of traditional way of spraying water with old syringe. Pupils of both schools had a chance to try spraying water from syringe. Afterward they improved their knowledge in foreign languages because they competed in small groups in translating words from Slovene to Italian and vice versa. One of the groups was in a second round excellent because they guessed all words correctly. That game was very relaxing and funny for pupils because when they translated false for example mayor became bed. In another game that followed after both mayors had to complete coat of arms of the opposite municipality from puzzles. Participants in all games were not competitive because the meaning was more in socializing and to strengthen friendship. All participants got an evaluation questioner in the evening. They had to answer on 7 questions about project itself and about future cooperation and future joint projects. The most important impact of the project was improved cooperation between twinned municipalities and pupils of local schools. Participants felt differences and similarities between two municipality as well because participants from Lukovica were on visit of Amaroni in August 2018. Participants that visit Amaroni in August 2018 were the same that were included in EUYouth project, so they had a chance to compare municipalities and countries in terms of history, culture, activities of local associations. Project was based on common cultural, educational and social activities in order to strengthen bonds between participants of both municipalities. All participants realized that English as a main project language or any other foreign language still is a barrier for communication and participants got a conclusion to improve their knowledge of English language.

The day of 23/9/2018 was dedicated to final project evaluation with possibilities of future cooperation in joint projects and for farewell from the guests and departure them to the airport. Final project evaluation was made on collecting facts from the questionnaires that participants completed on the third day. Participants were very satisfied with the activities, timetable of activities and organization of the project EUYouth, they just wished for a sparer time between activities, pupils also wished for spare time to get to know with families of hosted pupils better and for socializing, including sport facilities. There were also ideas and interests to prepare new projects for exchanging experiences between adults, pupils, associations in fields of: tourism, culture, culinary, old habits, learning partner's languages, beekeeping (apiculture, apitherapy), exchanging choirs, motor associations, organizing annual games without borders for pupils, twinning between families, organizing festivals of culture, with including most important sightseeing and mountains in Slovenia. The most important conclusion of questionnaires was to continue with cooperation not only between municipalities but also between both local schools. Examples of future joint projects were: upgrading cooperation from measure of Town twinning to measure of Networks of Towns, Erasmus+ project, twinning with other municipalities, projects for widening horizons of knowledge of foreign languages.