

JUNIORS FOR SENIORS – ACTIVE AGING



Europe
for Citizens

Report

The municipality of Škofja Loka is a leading partner and developer of the two-year-long international project entitled "**The Young and the Elderly – Active Aging**", with which it won the tender of the European Commission – **Europe for Citizens Programme**.

The project includes 12 partner towns – and 11 of them are Douzelage towns: **Škofja Loka** (Slovenia), **Judenburg** (Austria), **Bad Kötzting** (Germany), **Asikkala** (Finland), **Bundoran** (Ireland), **Sušice** (Czech Republic), **Rokiškis** (Lithuania), **Kőszeg** (Hungary), **Holstebro** (Denmark), **Siret** (Romania), **Meerssen** (the Netherlands), and the city of **Kruja** is in Albania.

Within the project, we will organize 6 thematic events that will take place between September 2019 and October 2021 in four partner towns: Škofja Loka, Judenburg, Kőszeg, and Bad Kötzting.

This 6 events which will take place in 5 partner towns according to the following schedule:

1. Škofja Loka, Slovenia (26.9. – 28.9.2019)

2. Škofja Loka, Slovenia (3.9. - 5.9.2020);

3. Kőszeg, Hungary (26.8.-29.8.2021);

4. Judenburg, Avstria (23.9.-25 9.5.2021);

5. Bad Kötzting Germany (21. 4.- 24.4.2022);

6. Škofja Loka, Slovenia (25.8.-28.8.2022)

The main topic is to achieve the successful Intergenerational coexistence of population and transfer of good practices from partner towns. The aging of the population is a pressing issue for the whole European Union, and upon completion of this project, we want use our newly acquired knowledge and understanding to become an elderly-friendly municipality.

Work topics of the meetings will include elderly care, e-literacy, intergenerational cooperation, accessibility, participation, and participatory budget.

The introductory event of the project entitled "**An International Meeting of Mayors on the topic of Development and Exchange of Participatory Practices**" was hosted in Škofja Loka from 26th to 28th September 2019.

Event No. 1

Škofja Loka, September 26th – 28th 2019

The introductory event of the project "**Juniors for seniors – Active Aging**", entitled "An International Meeting of Mayors on the topic of Development and Exchange of Participatory Practices".

Location / Dates: The event took place in Škofja Loka (Slovenia), from 26th to 28th September 2019.

Participation:

The meeting was attended by delegations from Bad Kötzting (Germany), Judenburg (Austria), Kőszeg (Hungary), Rovinj (Croatia), Chojna (Poland), Rokiškis (Lithuania), Sušice (Czech Republic), Siret (Romania), Meerssen (the Netherlands) and Maasmechelen (Belgium). Representatives from Sherborn in the UK and Sesimbra from Portugal also took part in the meeting.

Due to problems with Adria Airways airline, participation was truncated as delegations from Denmark, Sweden and Albania had to cancel their trips. Albania was thus represented by an ambassador accredited to the Republic of Slovenia, Mr. Pëllumb Qazimi.

The international meeting was also attended by some mayors and representatives from partner Slovenian municipalities: Gašper Uršič (Mayor of Cerklje na Gorenjskem), Rok Roblek (Mayor of Preddvor), Janez Černe (Deputy Mayor of MO Kranj) and Silvana Markič (Director of the Municipal Administration in the Municipality of Medvode).

The introductory event finally involved 50 citizens, including 24 participants from the city of Škofja Loka, Slovenia; 2 participants from the city of Judenburg, Austria; 2 participants from the city of Kőszeg, Hungary; 2 participants from the city of Bad Kötzting, Germany; 2 participants from the city of Chojna, Poland; 4 participants from the city of Sušice, Czech Republic; 2 participants from the city of Siret, Romania; 2 participants from the city of Rokiškis, Lithuania; 2 participants from the city of Rovinj, Croatia; 2 participants from the city of Meerssen, Netherlands; 2 participants from the city of Maasmechelen, Belgium. 2 representatives from Sherborne, UK and 3 representatives from Sesimbra, Portugal also took part in the meeting. Albania was represented by their ambassador, Mr. Pëllumb Qazimi.

Short description:

Mayors, deputy mayors and directors of municipal administrations from twinned and partner towns actively participated in the international meeting on the current topic of participation, which took place on **Friday, September 27th, 2019** at Sokolski dom in Škofja Loka.

After the introductory greeting by Tine Radinja, the Mayor of Škofja Loka, Miha Ješe, who is in charge of international cooperation and Annigje Kruytbosch, the president of the Douzelage Association, the official program of the international meeting began.

The programme of the conference, which focused on various forms of public participation, was carried out in English by hosts Alenka Blazinšek Domenis and Matej Cepin.

Following the introductory presentation of the central topic, methods and goals of the meeting, Raf Terwingen, the Mayor of the twinned town Maasmechelen, Elke Florian, Deputy Mayor of Judenburg in Styria (Austria), and Janez Černe from the neighbouring Municipality of Kranj, presented selected examples of good participatory practices. A common thread of various successful practices is in creating and building trust that strengthens the community and cooperation, in introducing practices that are very inclusive, can be used by all citizens, are sustainable and encourage (intergenerational) cooperation.

In the second part, the two hosts introduced the step-by-step process and procedures that led to the introduction, implementation and functioning/operating of the participatory budget in the municipality of Ajdovščina, where the employees have done pioneering work in this field in Slovenia.

In the final part of the international meeting, participants took part in the workshop, presented ideas and made concrete suggestions on how participation could be implemented and how it could be successful for the elderly and the young in their local communities.

Upon completion of the workshops, the participants were informed about the future course of events and about the programme of the international project Europe for Citizens, which will culminate with the organization of an international conference in Škofja Loka, in May 2020.

In the evening part of the meeting, the participants discussed the topic addressed and made plans about the organisation and contents of the next five meetings, which will be held in Judenburg, Škofja Loka, Kőszeg, Kruja and Bad Kőtzting.

Event no. 2 Škofja Loka, September 3rd - 5th 2020

Introduction of the project Juniors for seniors- active aging.

Event in Škofja Loka was focused on the solving of the challenge of the quality aging of seniors through workshops and exchange of experiences and good practices. Program was tailor made for the needs of four target groups: officials, teachers, students and seniors.

The event involved 95 citizens, including 61 participants from municipality of Škofja Loka /Slovenia, 2 participants from the Bashkia Kruje /Albania, 3 participants from Stadtgemeinde Judenburg/Austria, 5 participants from Stadt Bad Kőtzting/Germany, 3 participants from Bundorain/Ireland, 4 participants from Mesto Sušice/Czech Republic, 4 participants from Municipality of Rokiškis/Lithuania, 4 participants from Kőszeg Varos/Hungary, 3 participants from Orasul Siret/Romania, 6 participants from Vereniging Meerssen/Netherlands.



Event No. 3

Kőszeg, August 26th – 29th 2021

"Intergenerational cooperation and seniors e-education"

Participation: The event involved 90 citizens, including 51 participants from Kőszeg Város, Hungary, 5 participants from municipality of Škofja Loka, Slovenia, 4 participants from Stadtgemeinde Judenburg, Austria, 5 participants from Stadt Bad Kötzting, Germany, 3 participants from Mesto Sušice, Czech Republic, 3 participants from Municipality of Rokiškis, Lithuania, 2 participants from Tryavna, Bulgaria, 3 participants from Orasul Siret, Romania, 3 participants from Vereniging Meerssen, Netherlands, 4 participants from Zvolen, Slovakia, 4 participants from Chojna, Poland, 1 participant from Holstebro, Denmark and 2 participants from Agros, Cyprus.

Location/Dates: The event took place in Kőszeg, Hungary, from 26/08/2021 to 29/08/2021

Short description:

The event in Kőszeg focused on the relationship of seniors and modern technology, e-education of seniors, change of education, travel, and communication possibilities. Workshops, presentations, discussions, exchange of experiences and good practices and study visits were used to reach our goals. The main target groups were teachers and students, but the presence and point of view of some seniors and officials were also important.



Event No.4

Judenburg, September 23th - 25th 2021

The project « ACTAGE - Juniors for seniors active ageing » is funded with the support of the European Union under the program "Europe for Citizens"

Participants:

The event involved 75 citizens from the participating cities:

- Judenburg/Austria: 40
- Skofja Loka/Slovenia: 16
- Bad Kötzting/Germany: 3
- Bundoran/Ireland: 2
- Susice/Czech Republic: 3
- Rokiskis/Lithuania: 4
- Köszeg/Hungary: 4
- Meerssen/Nederlands: 3

The event in Judenburg focused on the topic of "Mobility and Accessibility for Seniors". The program was tailored to the target groups of officials (especially politicians) and senior citizens.

Opening

The congress was opened by Hannes Dolleschall, mayor of the City of Judenburg, Elke Florian, vice mayor of the City of Judenburg, Thorsten Wohleser, city councilor and organizer of "Douzelage"

Judenburg, Annigje Krytbosch, president of "Douzelage" and Miha Jese, organizer of "Juniors for Seniors" - active aging.

Daniel Peter Gressl - the initiator of the Ö-Nurse Judenburg - an all-encompassing health consultancy and expert in the care sector, was invited as a key-note speaker. The topic of this speech was "Challenges of Aging", where the current development trend of senior citizens was presented and discussed. In particular, the needs of a so-called community nurse were addressed.



Workshop 1

The first workshop dealt with the current situation in the participating cities. This includes, in particular, suggestions for improvement and existing obstacles for the elderly and, in particular, people with reduced mobility, as well as "best practice" examples from the participating cities.

The main tenor was that all cities have similar problems. -> For example, there are lanterns / lamps in the way or there are potholes and bumps. According to the participants, the environmental concept is also related to the topic of "accessibility". To this end, some cities have significantly reduced the cost of public transport for seniors.

As a prime example: in Skofja Loka you can use certain public transport for free on shorter journeys.

Even if one cannot directly compare the circumstances and legal requirements of the individual states/cities, a few things could already be changed by using small resources. Another example is the planning of own "senior bus stations" near the city center and also lowering the boarding

level of the means of transport. "Disabled people" would be happy about more handicapped accessible ways and are very grateful for support. These people are only able to cope with this to a limited extent in their everyday life and are therefore severely disadvantaged.

Each participating city has prepared a lecture for this purpose, with the presentations of the individual cities being attached.



Workshop 2

This workshop was carried out according to the principle of "learning by doing". Four routes were defined in which the participants had the opportunity to overcome barriers themselves in a wheelchair, a walker, a stroller and using glasses for being blind. Best practice examples from the host city of Judenburg were tested and insurmountable obstacles were perceived. This close-up approach was received very positively and was able to make the extremely important topic tangible in a very informative way and generated quite a few AHA experiences! In the subsequent discussion rounds, these experiences could be exchanged and documented.

The main findings of this workshop were:

- There are obstacles that can be removed with simple means. (e.g. Vinzmarkt ramp, uncoordinated poster stands)

- There are barrier-free facilities that do not work because there are small technical deficiencies (e.g. lift at the local post office)
- There are barrier-free facilities that cannot be classified as barrier-free due to a lack of information. (BF public toilet)
- There are barriers that cannot be removed or can only be removed with uneconomical effort. There are regulations for this, but there are also alternative solutions. (Paths with large differences in height, higher entrances directly to the public property, etc.)
- The topic is still not anchored in people's minds, it needs a continuous and target-oriented information channel.

The following measures can be set out as concrete steps from this workshop:

- Further direct inspections with all stakeholders (people with disabilities and decision-makers)
- Evaluation of the city centers for quick win solutions
- Creation of an action plan with regard to the results
- Implementation of an action plan and the Quick win findings
- Creation of a barrier-free guide for entrepreneurs and Entrepreneurs as well as for the public space (traffic / squares / paths and housing)
- information campaigns
- acoustic signals at traffic lights are not available and can be a problem for blind people.

Tenor: Accessibility serves us all! Stepless entrances and good information as well as orientation represent added value not only for people with disabilities and the elderly, but are the basic prerequisite for micromobility, families with prams and everyone who wants to use a city that is liveable and future oriented.

Workshop 3

The two focus groups “Officials” and “Seniors” were divided into two working groups. The findings of the individual participating cities from workshop 1 and from the city walk from workshop 2 were discussed and specific applications for the individual cities were derived.

The bottom line is that a lot is taken for granted. The change in the age structure (note: people are getting older) must be incorporated into the planning of the future in order to identify and solve problems relating to micro-mobility and accessibility as soon as possible. The experience of the “Citywalk with Obstacles - Workshop 2” was important for all participants, because certain obstacles could only be understood through direct experience.

Another conclusion was that barriers for disabled people need to be removed. These changes must continue to be checked, updated and improved on an ongoing basis. Small improvements can make a big contribution to making everyday life easier. It would be extremely important to get larger groups of people (old & young) excited about this topic and to encourage them to improve.

In conclusion, it can be said that the participating cities have already developed an awareness of the topic of “mobility (in old age or with disabilities)”, but there are still many opportunities for improvement. Here, too, the tenor was established that all stakeholders (disabled people, elderly people, politicians ...) should check the cities for their accessibility at regular intervals. We do this together based on individual circumstances and not on the basis of stuck patterns.

Actuality: Much of what is still state-of-the-art today may already be out of date in a few years, especially with high investment sums and large structural measures, it is important to incorporate these developments as best as possible.

Concretely defined measures and advice:

- The “city walk” model should be used regularly in all cities
- Barrier-free guidelines should be established in cities, so citizens should be involved in building measures as well as possible.
- Accessibility must be incorporated into urban development concepts as a fixed point - Financing and subsidies pose great challenges for many municipalities, and there are also enormous differences between the individual states and cities.
- Changes in the age structure must be considered when you are developing cities
- Cycle paths and sidewalks must be state-of-the-art
- Public transport stations should be checked for suitability and accessibility
- Public transport (keyword: entrances) is often a major problem
- Public toilets are a major problem. They either do not exist, are closed or are not accessible. The sanitary facilities in Europapark in Judenburg can be cited as a positive example.
- Gutters and manhole covers are often an insurmountable obstacle and should be checked for their accessibility.
- Due to their height and size, machines and post boxes are often inaccessible by people.
- Floor markings are a potential source of danger, especially when it is wet
- Decorative objects often pose a problem for prams and wheelchairs.
- Many ramps are often blocked with other objects (e.g. rubbish bins)







Event No. 5

Bad Kötzting, April 21th - 24th 2022

Participation: *The event involved 53 citizens, including 4 participants from Judenburg, Austria, 5 participants from Škofja Loka, Slovenia, 7 participants from Kőszeg, Hungary, 20 participants from Bad Kötzting, Germany, 3 participants from Sušice, Czech Republic, 3 participants from Rokiškis, Lithuania, 7 participants from Meerssen, Netherlands, and 3 participants from Bundoran, Ireland, 1 participant from Altea, Spain.*

Location / Dates: The event took place in Bad Kötzting, Germany, from 21/04/2022 to 23/04/2022

Short description:

The event in Bad Kötzting focused on the forms of housing and ways of life as well as the possibilities of living together in the European partner cities. Offers in the cities of Europe were also presented that promote the coexistence of young and old people and examples from practice were shown directly on site in Bad Kötzting.



Thursday, 21st.04.2022

All delegations from the European partner cities arrived in the course of the morning. Immediately after checking in at the hotel, all participants received an information bag about Bad Kötzting, the Bavarian Forest holiday region, the Cham district and flyers about interesting places that were

promoted by the European Union in terms of international understanding on the German-Czech border. The border region in the Bavarian Forest near the Czech border offers some interesting leisure activities that are funded by the European Union. Particular attention was paid to these during the compilation of the information bags.

In addition, information material from the "Europe Direct" information center in Furth im Wald was enclosed. The bags were put together, packed, and distributed by young people from Bad Kötzing.

All participants who arrived by plane were received directly at the airport by the main organizer Julian Preidl. The guests exchanged ideas in English, German and French. During the trip to Bad Kötzing, there was a small tour through interesting places in Lower Bavaria such as Deggendorf and Viechtach.



Note:

In the following descriptions of the Juniors for Seniors - active aging weekend in Bad Kötzing, the so-called "Jugendrat Bad Kötzing" is written more frequently. This is a non-partisan youth committee of the city of Bad Kötzing with many committed young people. The aim of the main

organizer was to inspire as many young people as possible for Europe and European values. Through co-organization and responsibility during the events, barriers were broken down, a European youth network expanded and the number of sympathizers for a peaceful, intercultural exchange increased. The Bad Kötzing youth council has already taken part in projects of the Douzelage town partnership several times. By co-organizing events in one's own home town, the popularity of Europe and the joy of intercultural exchange was again significantly increased. Since the joint meetings as part of the Juniors for Seniors - active aging events, some young participants have been exchanging ideas almost daily via the social platforms Instagram and Snapchat.

Official opening of the event

After the delegations had checked in, the guests were picked up from their accommodation and escorted to the park in the town of Bad Kötzing. The European guests were greeted by traditional Bavarian brass band music near the so-called "Europe Stone Circle" in the park. The well-known brass band "Die Weißenregner" from Bad Kötzing played some traditional marches from Bavaria, Bohemia, Austria and Slovenia. The youth council members organized the opening and wore traditional clothes. The war in Ukraine and the coming challenges for Europe were discussed in the opening speeches of the main organizers.

Here is a quote from the speeches:

“A lot of worrying things have changed since the start of the series of events in Europe. Can you still remember when we discussed the Cold War on stage in Köszeg last fall? About the experiences from back then? Also here in Bad Kötzing we can see the secret service towers that spied on the Soviet Union 40 years ago. Unfortunately, just a few months later, the world has changed for the worse again. Ukraine is much closer to Bad Kötzing than our sister city in Portugal. Fear and terror are spreading among our friends in Eastern Europe. It's war in Europe again. The experiences we were told about in Köszeg could come back faster than we would like. Is it freedom and openness that tempts some to commit atrocities? I'm shocked by the pictures, the aggression, the many innocent deaths. Our freedom and our community is under threat like never before. I hope for peace and that towers similar to those we see in Köszeg, Susice and here in Bad Kötzing will not be built again near our partner cities in Eastern Europe. The message of peace is therefore more important than ever, Douzelage is more important than ever. Europe thrives on togetherness and a network that guarantees peace. This event and Douzelage stands for all of that. We are the message that Europe needs now. Our town twinning is a ray of hope in these dark times. We keep in touch and welcome everyone. That's why I'm pleased that representatives from France and Spain, who weren't actually part of the program, came. Here, with us, everyone is welcome. Because although we are all different, we are a European entity because we face basically the same challenges, because everyone tries to do their best and we inspire each other with that. In Skoja Loka, Judenburg and Köszeg, we were impressed by the many new innovations that combine the tried and tested with the new. Ideas for young and old, new perspectives that enrich our lives. Because our goal is to bring people together with “Active Aging – Juniors for Seniors”.” (Julian Preidl)

After the speeches, the participants had the opportunity to exchange ideas at a small reception. As a sign of hospitality, representatives of the city and the youth parliament presented typical Bavarian gingerbread hearts that were made for the project and name tags to facilitate the exchange. This was followed by a joint dinner with typical dishes from the Bavarian Forest region.

Friday, 22nd.04.2022

After breakfast, young people from Bad Kötzting accompanied the delegations to the local high school.

At the beginning, Spela Justin and Miha Jese presented the results of the survey. A few weeks in advance, the participants were sent questionnaires for seniors, young people and the city administrations, asking about the living arrangements in the respective twin towns. A total of over 500 people in the European partner cities took part. For young people, it became apparent that most respondents attend secondary school or university, live in a city of between 3,000-20,000 people and are not in a partnership. The majority of the seniors surveyed also live in cities of this size and are between 65 and over 90 years old.

Young people indicated that the majority lived in a two-generation house, while the seniors surveyed lived in one-generation houses. It is reasonable to assume that young people also describe their parents as a different generation. Together, however, the two age groups stated that a clear majority has more than 60m² of living space available. However, more than 75% of seniors stated that they have the entire living space to themselves, while young people mostly have between 20-30m² at their disposal. Interestingly, with regard to their type of housing, young people state that more than 60% of the houses are 40 years old or younger and are in good condition, while the majority of the houses of the elderly are over 40 years old and only partially renovated. The costs for living space per person are at the same level for both age groups. Half pay less than €200 per month, a quarter up to €300. Only the additional costs are slightly higher for seniors. Fortunately, the majority of young people can imagine living together with several generations. Visit the Active Aging Program webpages for more information.

After the presentation of the results, the participants were invited to speak, discuss and comment on the results.

After that, the participants were divided into groups and discussed prepared questions. In the following you will first read the questions and then briefly summarized answers that arose in the course of discussions.

Are there enough activities for Juniors AND Seniors? Which ones are there? Where is still need for action?

Extract from the answers of the participants:

Many activities are set in clubs, this applies to almost all cities at the table.

Differences arise from the fact that the funding models in the individual countries and cities are very different. Brass bands, fire brigades, football clubs and theater clubs are suitable for cooperation between juniors and seniors. In addition, almost every town has its own pensioners' associations, so it is important here that knowledge and experience are exchanged between the generations. Cooperation with schools and cultural centers often promises success.

Challenges:

- financial barriers
- legal barriers

However, ideas must come from the population so that they can support and implement politics. This is also important so that the population supports these initiatives.

Under what conditions does it work best for several generations to live together in one house? Is dispute guaranteed? Example: Seniors may want quiet, while grandchildren want the exact opposite. How can problems be solved?

Extract from the answers of the participants:

One cannot impose one idea on all citizens here. Every situation has to be considered and solved individually.

The most important aspects seem to be as follows

- It is a giving and taking
- Quite simply, living together is often not desired, and no coercion should be exercised.

Ideas:

- citizen participation e.g. with questionnaires
- combined flats with services (e.g. Kindergarten and assistance services)
- Shared places (e.g. multigenerational playgrounds)

The Juniors survey shows that if young people had enough money, they would not live with the older generation. How far away is our society from living together in reality? Is living together always due to financial reasons?

Extract from the answers of the participants:

You must rethink the respective funding models. Depending on the country there are incentives for people to have their own apartment or the “Hotel Mum”. Circumstances change over the course of a lifetime, and one often has to become independent in order to return to a multi-generational home.

Conclusion:

- We must learn to live together again

What are the reasons why so many seniors live alone (with their partner)? Why are the kids moving away?

Extract from the answers of the participants:

You don't want to move out of the house you've lived in all your life. Another challenge is often the money, it is often more expensive to take a smaller apartment than to stay in the old apartment/house.

One of the most common reasons children move away is for career changes and college.

More efficient use of living space: how do we do that? Does your government support it?

Extract from the answers of the participants:

Dedication policy and building plans must be adapted. The housing construction of 50 years ago can no longer be compared with today.

Ideas:

- Tax reductions
- more flats in public hands
- airBNB regulations

Which offers must clubs offer to bring juniors and seniors together?

Extract from the answers of the participants:

- Attractive offers for both age groups, such as bicycle tours
- Improved communication between the clubs, because the offer is only used if it is communicated in the best possible way. Many don't notice the offer, but would like to take part

Juniors and Seniors speak the same language but use different words. Can this cause communication barriers? How to overcome the communication barriers between juniors and seniors?

Extract from the answers of the participants:

Linguistic development has always existed and always will. These language differences were not considered significant in our group.

After a short coffee break, the delegations from the European partner cities prepared for their presentations on their respective hometowns. A few weeks before the start of the event in Bad Kötzting, the guests were asked to prepare presentations. These presentations aim to answer the following questions:

- *How do people (students, (young) families, seniors) live in each town?*
- *Is it easy to buy or built a house in your town? If not, why?*

- *Do older people still live in a house without using every room while young families live in small flats because they don't find houses?*
- *Do you have institutions where juniors and seniors are living together?*
- *Are there living spaces explicitly for juniors/seniors?*
- *Are demographic and social changes to be expected in your city that will change the way people live? What are the solutions to the challenges of the future?*
- *What problems and solutions exist in your city/country about housing?*
- *Is there a governmental contact point in your city/country that is dedicated to the topic of "housing"? What do they offer?*
- *Are there any projects in your city on the topic of "shared apartments for juniors/seniors"?*

The presentations including the detailed results can be found on the "Active Aging - Juniors for Seniors" website. The purpose of the presentations was to find projects and best examples of successful implementation in the respective partner cities. The idea of the event is to inspire each other in Europe, so that good projects that have a positive impact on society can also be used in other European countries. Interestingly, it turned out that some of the partner cities have similar challenges and problems, but sometimes solve them in different ways. The results of the different approaches were presented, discussed with each other and already adopted.

After lunchtime talks about the similarities and differences in Europe, the delegations from the partner cities set out for the first best-practice example in Bad Kötzting. It is a retirement home with a kindergarten. Seniors and children live together here and enrich each other. Young and old come together in a shared dining room and during daily activities. Children are cared for in small groups. Seniors look forward to singing, talking and laughing with the children every day. The European guests had some questions about the realization of the project. The head of the kindergarten and the management made it possible for the participants to visit the house and were ready to answer questions.

After that, the participants went in the direction of the city center. There they were received by the archivist of the town of Bad Kötzting. This is a well-known historian who, in addition to his work in the town hall, provides extensive information about the history of the city on his own personal blog. He reported on the best-known tradition in Bad Kötzting, which is known beyond the national borders. The Bad Kötzting Pentecost Ride. So that the tradition can last for more than 600 years, young and old Bad Köztzingers take part in the Whitsun ride every year and revive the tradition. Age doesn't matter, the tradition is lived together. Common experiences during the ride take place without differentiating between young and old. The archivist's historical accounts were supplemented by a short city tour, during which the Douzelage sister city house was also presented. This is one of the oldest houses in the city center and is an artistic highlight. The European friends looked for the facade of their own city and that of their friends and then took a group photo together.

At the end of the workshop day, the participants visited the so-called "Sinocur" building. There the guests heard an interesting lecture by Prof. Dr. Wühr about the unique health offer for the residents and visitors of the city. The focus was on living as stress-free as possible, healthy nutrition and the impressive results of traditional Chinese medicine. The clinic for traditional Chinese medicine in Bad Kötzing works with a world-renowned university in Beijing. In addition, the idea behind the so-called Kneipp cure was explained. During a tour of the health rooms, the Sinocur concept was explained to the Europeans in more detail and Kneipp applications were demonstrated.

After a short break, the guests from Europe were invited to dinner together. The members of the youth council organized the evening. Under blue light with a starry sky, based on the European flag, the participants could enjoy typical Bavarian specialties. Pro-European stickers were distributed on the tables, which the participants could take with them. A DJ provided a good atmosphere. After the meal, the young people from Bad Kötzing presented their specially developed Europe quiz. The sometimes tricky questions about the European Union challenged the guests, who took part with great enthusiasm. The three best European teams received non-cash prizes from shops in Bad Kötzing. Afterwards, the delegations presented the hosts with wonderful gifts related to their respective hometowns. The participants let the evening end together until late at night.

Saturday, 23rd.04.2022

The program on this day was a voluntary, additional program, which was largely organized by the young people of the city of Bad Kötzing. During the offers, the European friends exchanged ideas. Strangers became friends through joint activities. The delegations that have not yet left could choose between three leisure options:

Visit of the SPA AQACUR

The Bad Kötzing swimming pool has a number of different pools, a large sauna area and a number of slides for children and the young at heart. During the visit, the guests from Bad Kötzing's European partner cities were able to experience the diverse possibilities of the bathing and sauna landscape, which makes the tourism region in the Bad Kötzing region so special.

Walking on the Planet-Way with a visit of our Geodetic Observatory in Wettzell

The subject of planets and the universe also plays a major role in Bad Kötzing. The reason is the geodetic observatory in the Wettzell district. There, ground measurements are carried out by the Federal Agency for Cartography together with the Technical University in Munich. The data collected there are used to calculate coordinate systems in the field of geosciences. The special place on the outskirts of Bad Kötzing was explained by an interesting tour by a geodesy employee. For example, she explained how the laser telescope works to measure distances to satellites and the moon.

Hiking on the mountain "Kaitersberg"

Hiking on Bad Kötzing's most famous mountain with a height of exactly 999m was gladly accepted by some participants. Arrived at the summit, the participants could look over the so-called "Zellertal" and Bad Kötzing. Afterwards the group had a meal together in a mountain hut.

In the evening, the delegations visited the state-run casino in Bad Kötzing. There the guests were welcomed by the head of the house and were able to get an impression of the unique architecture of the building. The Bad Kötzing casino represents a blue gem that plays with the light. Art and cultural events are offered in the CasinoLounge. By candlelight in the casino atmosphere, there was a last dinner together.



Event No. 6

Škofja Loka, August 25th – 28th 2022

Final conclusions of the Project and the General Meeting of the association of the European towns "DOUZELAGE"

Participation: The event involved 242 citizens, including 99 participants and organization staff from Škofja Loka, 1 participant from Bashkia Kruje, 4 participants from Stadtgemeinde Judenburg, Austria, 9 participants from Stadt Bad Kötzing, Germany, 4 participants from Asikkala Kunta, Finland, 6 participants from Douzelage Bandoren, Ireland, 8 participants from Mesto Sušice, Czech Republic, 6 participants from Municipality of Rokiškis, Lithuania, 7 participants from Koszeg Varos Onkormanyzata, Hungary, 7 participants from Holstebro Douzelage, Denmark, 5 participants from Tryavna, Bulgaria, 6 participants from Orasul Siret, Romania, 15 participants from Vereniging Meerssen, Netherlands, 6 participants from Chojna, Poland, 2 participants from Agros, Cyprus, 4 participants from Rovinj-Rovigo, Croatia, 6 participants from Sesimbra, Portugal, 5 participants

from Altea, Spain, 7 participants from Granville, France, 10 participants from Marsaskala, Malta, 3 participants from Niederanven, Luxembourg, 3 participants from Oxelosund, Sweden, 12 participants from Sherbourne, United Kingdom, 3 participants from Sigulda, Latvia and 4 participants from Turi, Estonia.

Location: The event took place in Škofja Loka in the cultural centrum Sokolski dom, in Gymnasia Škofja Loka, and youth center Rdeča ostriga.

Short description: The event should be organized already in the year 2020 and 2021, but due the Coronavirus postponed and finally organized. The three days' event opened with the photo exhibition on Thursday, August 25, 2022. Next two days had been organized meetings and workshops separated on the three locations for the three groups of participants: Officials, Teachers, and Students. The workshops of all groups were presented also to Seniors.

Report of the General Meeting of officials.

So we were delighted that we have succeeded this year. We were glad that our friends and partners from all over Europe finally managed to get together in our town and shared their clear vision of cooperation.

In these highly uncertain times of the war in Europe - the consequences of which have been directly felt by some of our partner towns - we gathered and worked together – we testified the friendship and solidarity of all nations!

Together – through the presentation of the conclusions of the international 'Juniors for Seniors - active aging' project – we also tried to find solutions to another extremely contemporary challenge: how to establish, preserve and strengthen

active cooperation between young people and the elderly!

This year's General Meeting of the Douzelage took place in Škofja Loka, starting on Thursday the 25th of August, and ending on Saturday, the 27th. As a part of the General Meeting, naturally, the Youth Meeting was held as well.

Although the GM has officially begun on Thursday the 25th, quite a few delegates had already arrived in Škofja Loka on Wednesday. With these delegates, we had a relaxed dinner and took it easy for the evening so that we would be fresh for the next day's start of the GM.

The official launch of the GM took place in Sokolski dom in Škofja Loka, where there was an opening of the exhibition of the previous Douzelage photo contests. After the hosts' acceptance speeches we all had dinner and got to know each other.

The **main topics/key challenges** of these high-quality projects were: seniors' e-educations, (public/accessible) transport, accessibility, and living conditions for seniors and youth.

And we were looking for solutions through the lens of **four focus groups:** officials, teachers, students, and seniors.

On **Friday, August 25th** we organized a **Common session** the final conclusions of the project were presented and discussed with all participants, several ambassadors of EU member states representatives of Slovenian senior organizations, and guests.

The organizers were praised for their extensive work and very hands-on reports. With these reports (that include appropriate/comparable solutions, conclusions, suggestions, and good practices) municipalities can start right away taking the necessary measures, following the examples from different towns.

Education Meeting Report

Having been appointed an EM chair *ad interim* last October in Cyprus, I was personally very honored and privileged to tailor the EM program.

The EM program was created in accordance with the main topic *Europe for Citizens - Juniors for seniors: Active Ageing* with a team of Škofja Loka Grammar School teachers. We wanted to share our school practices, local NGOs with their various activities and finally,

the guest teachers from 26 EU countries were asked to share their examples of juniors for seniors' cooperation and the new challenges they cope with.

Several workshops were organized at Škofja Loka Grammar school where we discussed many possibilities the schools in EU have when speaking of the elderly: various school projects, voluntary work in local communities and elderly home institutions, and different activities in their local community centers.

On the other side, Slovene NGOs (Škofja Loka Pensioners' Association Centre, Adult Education Centre, and others) presented their local and national schemes on the Slovene elderly care institutional system and intergenerational support for the elderly, and volunteers' associations.

In the discussion that followed it turned out that we all share more or less the same practices when speaking of cross-generation activities in different Douzelage towns.

One of our workshops focuses on local cultural heritage. Ms. Cirila Šmid, a local craftswoman, prepared all the necessary ingredients and materials for the teachers to model their own honey bread hearts decorated with two shaped local flowers. Despite her age (80) and the language barrier, she managed

very successfully (with some help, to be honest) to transfer her knowledge to others. We, the teachers, turned into the roles of students, following her instructions – a very classroom-like situation – learning new skills. When finished, she took our honey bread home, baked them, and finally

covered them in honey. The next morning, they were all nicely gift-wrapped and given back to the owners. The workshop was a great success.

We decided to invite an expert on our teenagers, dr. Žan Lep, Pedagogical Institute Ljubljana, who prepared a lecture for EM participants: *We should talk about the zoomers*. The EM participants all teach in secondary schools, which means that we all share the same problems since young people born after 2000

(i.e. *the zoomers*) are alike throughout Europe.

Finally, there was time for the guest teachers to present their local practices. We realized that every town (and consequently) every school with the help of local NGOs, municipalities, and also nationally through a wide range of different activities, projects and programs take active care of the elderly.

Since my chair of EM was in *ad interim*, we had to elect a new one. The only application was handed in by our colleague Mrs. Riikka Penttilä from Asikkala, Finland. She was given our full support for the next mandate to be the EM chair. To celebrate our meeting, we had a unique opportunity to listen to

Mrs. Rachel Milestone from Sherborn, Great Britain, and her short piano performance in our school hall.

“Very instructive, useful and interesting” was our guests’ comment at the end of the meeting. Personally, I was very pleased my team prepared and realized the EM program very successfully.

We all look forward to meeting with the next GM in Rovinj, Croatia, in 2023.

Jože Bogataj, headmaster

Škofja Loka Grammar School, Slovenia





Friday was the most intense day when it comes to activities of the Youth Meeting. The first part of the activities took place at MKC Pri rdeči ostrigi. To start of we got to know each other through some ice-breaker games in order to feel more relaxed and familiar with each other. What followed was a lovely presentation of the delegates from Bulgaria, who showed us exactly how they ensure great intergenerational coexistence and active ageing. In a group we then talked about our own experiences and good practices in that field. After the workshops and later lunch, we had some relaxing activities – handcraft workshops at Center DUO for one group and beach volley for the other. In the afternoon all of the participants were welcomed in a common session in Kino Sora, where they listened to the findings and conclusions of the project »Juniors for seniors – active ageing«, which has been in action since 2019, and has come to a close with the last meeting in Škofja Loka. After a group photo session all the delegations joined for dinner at Starman, where food and beverages were accompanied by a great atmosphere from a local band. The Youth delegates upon finishing dinner went on to proceed their evening in MKC Pri rdeči ostrigi, where they had a small party organised for them, which they thoroughly enjoyed.

Saturday started with Escape city – Škofja Loka edition, which was a great way of getting to know the town. Completing the escape, delegates gathered for Youth elections, where the new youth president was elected – mr. Zino Vreysen. He then went on to address the general meeting and assemble his council. In the afternoon, delegates were free to choose their own activities. Most opted for either a visit of our capital Ljubljana, or to take a swim in the Poljanska Sora river in Škofja Loka.

The event's official closing was on Saturday evening at a gala dinner, where all the participants received certificates of participation.

The Youth Meeting was for the bigger part organized by mr. Sergej Novak from Škofja Loka, with some help from mr. Evelin Koev from Bulgaria, at the time an active member on the council.





EUROPE FOR CITIZENS, JUNIORS FOR SENIORS – ACTIVE AGING PROJECTS SESSION IN ASIKKALA MEMO 16.9.2022

List of participants as an annex

1. Marja Koivisto, wellbeing coordinator of Asikkala opened the session and welcomed all participants to the discussion

2. Merja Palokangas-Viitanen, Eero Ala-Heikkilä and Saimi Vesterinen, members of Asikkalas 2022 Deuzelage-delegation told about their experience at the seminars and meetings in Skofja Loka.

3. Miha Jese, project manager juniors for seniors – active aging, attended the session via Teams. Miha Jese presented the project to the participants and told about different sessions in other cities that had taken place during this project.

We heard about different sessions, primary targets and conclusions of the project. It became very clear that we´re facing the same kind of challenges and difficulties about aging all over Europe and that all participants have tried to solve them by themselves.

We can use each others ideas and experience to tackle this challenge together. Projects main targets; intergenerational co-operation and seniors e-education, mobility and accessibility, accommodation for seniors and youth are targets/ challenges that we have

to discuss about and solve also in Asikkala.

4. Discussion

Project is very interesting, very important topics for us in Asikkala right now.

Some ideas:

- Computer-course for senior-associations meetings lead by students – it should be very easy, very

non-professional, more suitable for older person. Possibility to try and learn with youth.

- Our high school student do a musical production in their studies every year – We should figure out different venues to show the musical, so that it would be accessible for elderly too.
- Help at home by young volunteers for example to get the tv working or how to set up a computer desk
- We should organize more meetings like this and find out different methods to activate both juniors and seniors.
- Different joint clubs for juniors and seniors – for example cooking, arts and crafts, knitting, reading, nature etc.
- Voluntary courses of different subjects to high schoolers, that would include some “workshops” with elderly.
- Joint musical productions or stand up- comedy for all ages
- joint club or a meeting where we could talk about different traditions and modern ways to celebrate Christmas, Easter, Midsommerfest, All saints day, Independents day etc. – dig deep in the history of these celebrations and to think how to put together older and modern ways to celebrate.
- Volunteering at the seniors center Olo – our guidance student Sauli spoke about his experience in activating seniors at the everyday surroundings and couraged everyone to come by and see it themselves – this would make it easier for juniors to meet older people – less prejudice both ways!

After meeting in Asikkala



TOGETHER WE CAN DO EVERYTHING!