

The project «Staňme sa súčasťou Európy» 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 1150 citizens, notably 70 participants from the city of Vasegerszeg (**Hungary**), 80 participants from the city of Štěpánkovice (**Czech republic**) and 1000 participants from the city of Štrba (**Slovakia**).

Location/ Dates: The event took place in **Štrba, Slovakia**, from 28/08/2015 to 30/08/2015.

Short description:

Friday, 28/08/2015 – At the beginning delegations of foreign partners came to Štrba. Participants from the Czech village Štěpánkovice came a little bit earlier, since they are at less distance from Štrba, as the Hungarian partner Vasegerszeg. When all of the foreign guests were at Štrba, ceremonial opening took place. They got detailed information about the program of the three-day event. Ceremonial opening was held at the municipal office in the presence of the Mayor and the Municipal Council of the Applicant. After the opening ceremony of the meeting partners presented themselves with a short cultural program through which they started to know each other. After the first activities, program continued with facultative activities. Foreign participants could choose: a boating on the Lake Štrbské Pleso, or visit Wooden house in Štrba, or they could try cableway to Solisko hill. In the evening, the discussion on the topic "Citizen and the State" was held. The participants compared the situation in different countries regarding the possibilities and the rights of citizens. They picked up opportunities offered by the European Union for its citizens (the possibilities to join to various surveys on views about different measures, express their opinion with the tools operated by the Union). During this program, a current situation in the Member States of the EU Community was discussed.

Saturday 29/08/2015 - during the second day of the event programs in the spirit of common history were held. Partner delegations participated in the commemorative act of the 70th anniversary of the end of the Second World War and commemorated the 71st anniversary of the Slovak National Uprising. This event is still influential historic milestone in the history of Slovakia. The ceremonial speeches highlighted importance of local actors in the anti-fascist struggles. This topic was followed with the exhibition of artist works of youth and students. Exhibition was called "Youth Against War" and presented the attitude of young people through artistic works. The exhibition was opened for public. The anniversary of the WW II ending was commemorated through the laying of wreaths at the memorial, where a cultural program in the spirit of traditions was held. A bonfire was flamed on as a symbol of partnership and anti-fascist resistance.

For the younger generation has been very useful the activity called "Youth in Union" - invited expert presented the possibilities of foreign study visits, youth exchanges and scholarships. Young people were involved in the discussions which discussed their current situation in their own countries and they expressed also their opinion about the future of the EU. They portrayed their expectations and ideas, they want to implement in subsequent periods with the help of the Community. Later, the non-profit organizations become the center of the event. These were NO's active in the region. The exchange of experiences took place about national subsidy systems. Organizations also presented their objectives and results achieved so far in different areas of life (arts, sports, volunteering, social sectors, etc.). They have established contacts with each other and seek ways that could implement international cooperation in the future.

Diversity of European culture was represented by beautiful folk costumes, through which we honored the generations of our ancestors. Other cultural programs provided to present folks a pleasant and artistic experiences presented through various genres and languages. The evening belonged to entertainment, during which the new relationships between the participants strengthened. Through decoupled conversations participants were getting know each other in a better way as well as countries of their origins and their habits.

Sunday, 30/08/2015 - the last day joint event began with worship, which was open to everyone who cares for spiritual life. In a sign of equal opportunities ecumenical ceremony took place, as the present were not form a single religion. Common lunch was followed by a discussion, which was also attended by individual representatives of the partner municipalities. They discussed the various topics, such as development activities financed through EU funds, participation in municipal and other elections, civic activities, and cooperation at international level. An expert on European issues joined the program, who answered the questions of the participants and provided verified and accurate information.

After these activities program continued in more fun and informal nature. Teams of host and guests participants were involved in various competitions in the spirit of traditions. Good mood prevailed during wood sawing on time but also in competitions in hammering nails or in rolling of thread. Disciplines, full of humor brought joy to and tired down language barriers. Volleyball tournament was held on this day. It provided a space for those who loves sports. Instead of serious rivalry, the activity was more about building partnerships and teams.

The culmination of the event was a rich cultural program. Cultural program consisted of concerts, lectures of dances and other musical production. Participants were well entertained while listening to pop and folk music and enthusiastically adopted other attraction which was the presentation of various martial arts.

At the end of the event partners shortly evaluated the success of the project. They summarized the most important lessons learned through the event and agreed on future plans, which they intend to implement. Each said goodbye and returned to their homes.