

The project « #BFF » 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 570 citizens, notably 400 participants from the town of Tomášov (**Slovakia**), 30 participants from the city of Berg (**Austria**), 40 participants from the town of Nová Lhota (**Czechia**), 50 participants from the town of Halászi (**Hungary**), 50 participants from the town of Móragy (**Hungary**).

Location/ Dates: The event took place in Tomášov (**Slovakia**), from 17/09/2021 to 19/09/2021

Short description:

The day of 17/09/2021 was dedicated to the areas related to the development of cross-border partnerships. This was done through activities that made it possible to get to know each other better and get to know the opinions of citizens of other countries on current topics. Therefore, an exhibition of photographs capturing the existing partnership of municipalities was realized. This is how we wanted to show the citizens of the partner municipalities who were in Tomášov for the first time how the partnership we have achieved so far has taken place. The element of the union of the nations present was the European Union. The workshop was dedicated to show its benefits for citizens and municipalities, 17 years of EU membership, commemorate the enlargement of the EU in 2004. This activity brought new knowledge for many and helped to identify more with the EU. The evening program was marked by culture - rock theatre and cultural performances of national minorities.

The day of 18/09/2021 was dedicated to volunteering, solidarity and overcoming prejudice. An information stand with promotional materials about the EU was built in the centre of Tomášov. Its task was to enable participants to learn more about the EU. They were able to take information leaflets in Slovak and Hungarian, which they then study at home. Activities Volunteering at the local level and Solidarity at the borders - cross-border volunteering were focused on presentation volunteer associations operating in municipalities, as well as international associations that help migrants. This is how the topic of volunteering was spread among the participants. Citizens have learned how they can help at the local level, as well as at global crises (eg migration crisis). The debate on solidarity and volunteering at local level has boosted citizens' perceptions of their own commitment. At the same time, participants recalled an important issue that still plagues Europe. Competitive-entertainment and educational activities about the EU were implemented for the youngest participants. The children had fun here, not even what they had learned new information. The afternoon belonged to culture. The performances of the ensembles from the partner municipalities pointed out the multiculturalism of Europe. This created a friendly atmosphere and helped to break down barriers. We have brought the citizens together into one big European family.

The day of 19/09/2021 was dedicated to the areas of citizen involvement in community life, in local and European initiatives. First of all, young participants were confronted with learning about European programs and initiatives for young people from all over the EU. It was e.g., programs such as Erasmus +, the European Solidarity Corps, the European Initiative. As a result, they have found out what opportunities the EU has to offer. Religious ceremonies for all participants, followed by a discussion of seniors about their integration. Seniors discussed how they are perceived in the communities, how they are cared for by the town representatives and presented how different they are treated in each of the countries present. During the day, gastronomic presentations were held, which highlighted the culinary attractions of four nations. The joint meeting of the representatives of the partner municipalities concerned the involvement of young people in public affairs. Together, the representatives of the municipalities exchanged experiences and sought joint solutions. The afternoon discussion of the events of 1989 was a reminder for the older participants on events that changed the history of Central Europe forever. On the one hand, the communist regime fell in Czechoslovakia and gradually in other countries (including Hungary) and the borders opened west to Austria on the other. For younger participants, this was a history lesson that shaped Central Europe.