

The project «Peace – the essential need for the sustainability, development and well-being of the EU and its citizens» 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 303 citizens, notably 50 participants from Szabolcsi Fiatalok a Vidékért Egyesület (**Hungary**), 6 participants from Vanellus (**Slovakia**), 40 participants from Asociația Losonczy István Hagyományőrző és Sportegyesület (**Romania**), 40 participants from Asociácia Hornozemská Dalia (**Slovakia**), 40 participants from the city of Rakamaz (**Hungary**), 8 participants from the city of Bugac (**Hungary**), 119 participants from Udruženje Građana "Aracs-95" Novi Bečej (**Serbia**).

Location/ Dates: The event took place in **Novi Bečej, Serbia**, from 23/08/2019 to 25/08/2019.

Short description:

We got to know some of the sights of Novi Bečej on the first day of our event. We visited the cultural center, where we visited the local history exhibition, walked along the banks of the Tisa and became acquainted with the churches in the center. This was followed by a presentation by our Hungarian guest, Ildikó Szekeres. She came to us from the Europe Direct office in Szeged and talked to us about Serbia's candidate status. She outlined the whole process of accession and what Serbia is doing right now and its prospects for joining the Union.

A presentation on Europe for Citizens programme gave information about the opportunity to apply for a competition to those present.

Donations were steadily coming in to help raise funds for the project in the meantime. Most of the participants brought clothes, which were delivered to the needy by the local Red Cross. Several teams entered the cooking competition on the bank of the Tisa. We launched a partnership presentation in the evening with the project partners and local civilian and non-profit organizations as well. A small exhibition on the graphic design of euro coins was opened in the courtyard. Here, citizens could also learn about the common currency itself.

On Saturday morning we focused on the peace processes. First, we understood the reasons of the outbreak of the Yugoslav conflict in the '90s through a historical perspective and then those who survived the period were talking about it. There were shocking and horrific stories that illustrated the hyper-inflation, the failure of civil rights protection, deprivation and the losses in each of the communities. Here, we emphasized the importance of managing and closing international conflicts intelligently if we wanted to avoid the holocaust and massacres that unfortunately occurred during the Balkan war.

The afternoon program was also about the commitment to peace: we visited Arač jointly, where we learned about the history of the "Rangeland"-church rising here. We made a peace sign on the lawn together, which was recorded by drone. The children attended a workshop focused on sensitising - fairy tales with the topic of observing and accepting each other. Many beautiful drawings were also created during the creative activity. The multicultural event in the town offered a great opportunity to have fun, enjoy concerts and other cultural productions. We closed the day with a beer tasting after a joint dinner, during which we learned about the Banat handcrafted beers.

We visited the nearby Slano Kopovo Nature Reserve together on Sunday after breakfast. This backwater of the Tisa is very interesting as it runs dry completely in the summer but filled with water in the autumn-winter rainy weather. Its importance is also underlined by the fact that it is registered by the Ramsar Convention and has recently been developed with significant EU funding (in the frame of the 2014 - 2020 Interreg IPA CBC Hungary - Serbia program). We observed the flora of the area and there was a bird watching opportunity as well. Then the representatives of the partnership signed the cooperation agreement here, which will provide support during the future activities. We evaluated the success of the event (and also discussed the less successful moments), during and after the lunch and then said goodbye to our participants with gifts, specific to the region.



